

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE**  
**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**  
**ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**The Westin Crystal City**  
**Arlington, Virginia**  
**Hybrid Meeting**

**February 4, 2025**

**Approved May 6, 2025**

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## INDEX OF MOTIONS

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2. **Approval of Proceedings from December 23, 2024** by consent (Page 1)
3. **Move to exclude recreational mode split options from Draft Addendum III** (Page 12). Motion by Nichola Meserve; second by Chris Batsavage. Motion fails (Page 13).
4. **Move to not include options for an ocean recreational size limit under 28” in Draft Addendum III** (Page 16). Motion by Joe Cimino; second by Nichola Meserve. Motion passes (Page 17).
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**Move to include the concepts of Maryland season closure baseline adjustment approach in Draft Addendum III** (Page 33). Motion by Mike Luisi; second by John Clark. Motion postponed.  
  
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**Move to postpone the motion until the Spring Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board Meeting** (Page 31). Motion by Adam Nowalsky; second by Eric Reid (Page 34). Motion passes (Page 32).
6. **Motion to include possession limit options in Draft Addendum III** (Page 34). Motion by Adam Nowalsky; second by Emerson Hasbrouck (Page 36). Motion fails for lack of majority (Page 35).
7. **Motion to include possession limit options for for-hire mode split in Draft Addendum III** (Page 35). Motion by Adam Nowalsky; second by Eric Reid (Page 38). Motion fails for lack of majority (Page 36).
8. **Move to ask the Plan Development Team to investigate reallocation of the commercial quota among the 6 states that currently harvest striped bass from the coastal stock. There would be no increase from the total 2024 quota of those 6 states combined** (Page 37). Motion by John Clark, second Eric Reid. Motion fails (Page 39).
9. **Motion to approve Peter Fallon of Maine to the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel** (Page 39). Motion by Alison Hepler; second by Eric Reid. Motion passes with unanimous consent (Page 39).
10. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 40).

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members**

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)
Steve Train, ME (GA)	Joe Cimino, NY (AA)
Rep. Allison Hepler, ME (LA)	Jeff Kaelin, NJ (GA)
Cheri Patterson, NH (AA)	Adam Nowalsky, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)	Kris Kuhn, PA, proxy for T. Schaeffer (AA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Loren Lustig, PA (GA)
Nichola Meserve, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)	John Clark, DE (AA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Rep. Jennifer Armini, MA (LA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)	Michael Luisi, MD, proxy for L. Fegley (AA)
David Borden, RI (GA)	Russel Dize, MD (GA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Pat Geer, VA, proxy for J. Green (AA)
Matt Gates, CT, proxy for J. Davis (AA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)	Daniel Ryan, DC, proxy for R. Cloyd
Craig Miner, CT proxy for Rep. Gresko, CT (LA)	Lowell Whitney, US FWS
Marty Gary, NY (AA)	Max Appelman, NMFS

**(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)**

**Ex-Officio Members**

Tyler Grabowski, Technical Committee Chair	Sgt. Jeff Mercer, Law Enforcement Committee Rep.
Mike Celestino, Stk. Assmnt. Subcommittee Chair	

**Staff**

Bob Beal	Tina Berger	Emilie Franke
Toni Kerns	Madeline Musante	Katie Drew

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Tuesday, February 4, 2025, and was called to order at 2:45 p.m. by Chair Megan Ware.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR MEGAN WARE: It's 2:45, so we're going to call to order the Striped Bass Board.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

CHAIR WARE: We'll start with Approval of the Agenda. Are there any additions or modifications to today's agenda? Seeing none; the agenda is approved by consent. Next is approval of proceedings from our December, 2024 meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS**

CHAIR WARE: Are there any edits to the proceedings from December, 2024? Seeing none; the proceedings are approved by consent.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

CHAIR WARE: Next is public comment, so we're looking for comments on items that are not on the agenda. I'll look for a show of hands either in the room or on the webinar, and we'll go from there. I am not seeing any hands on the webinar or in the room. Giving folks one more opportunity.

### **REVIEW AND CONSIDER STOCK ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE**

CHAIR WARE: Okay, we will move on to Item Number 4, which is Review and Consider the Stock Assessment Schedule. Today we're going to review the timeline for our 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment and the Technical Committee

recommendations on the assessment schedule. I will pass it over to Katie Drew.

DR. KATIE DREW: I know it feels like we just finished the 2024 assessments, but it is in fact time to start thinking about the 2027 Benchmark Assessment timeline. Part of the reason we're maybe going a little faster than usual is striped bass is on the NRCC schedule to be reviewed through a spring 2027 research track process, which means it will get reviewed in mid-March 2027. In the past we've been on the fall schedule, so October or November-ish.

This means we do need to be done about six months sooner than we have been for previous benchmarks, so we are starting now, essentially. This timeline will allow us to include the recalibrated MRIP data, because that is scheduled to be released in April of 2026, but that does mean that we will only have data through 2025. We will not have time to get 2026 data into the assessment for this review.

### **REVIEW TIMELINE FOR 2027 BENCHMARK STOCK ASSESSMENT AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ON ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE**

DR. DREW: Here is kind of a maybe too detailed assessment timeline. The point I just wanted to highlight here is that a couple of the next steps will be approving the TORs in the Stock Assessment Subcommittee, and we already have put out the call for the 2024 data as a TC. We'll also be doing, because this is a benchmark, a full press release to allow other sources of data, new sources of data to be brought to the table by people outside of the usual Technical Committee process, to be considered at a data workshop in July of this year. We will sort of be finishing up with an Assessment Workshop in August of 2026, in order to have the assessment sort of completed and reviewed at the Technical Committee level by January in 2027, so that that report can go to

the Panel in mid-February, and then to the Review Workshop in mid-March.

In theory, this means it could be presented to the Board at spring meeting in 2027. However, in the past, we sent both to get the final assessment and peer reports from the NRCC, and so this may end up getting pushed back until August if the materials are not available in time. But either way, we're talking about either May or August, so spring or summer of 2027, having the completed benchmark assessment.

In terms of immediate Board tasks that are coming up, we do need to nominate and approve the SAS, so a call for nominations with that go out via e-mail after this meeting, and the SAS will be approved by the Board at the spring meeting. Similarly, we need to approve the TORs.

The TC will meet and provide a set of draft TORs as part of the materials for the spring meeting. At which point the Board can have a chance to provide edits or ask questions or provide feedback, and approve the TORs during that spring meeting, which will be then sent to the NRCC for their consideration and approval as part of their process. But those are two of the immediate things that we're going to look at the Board for coming up.

We also, technically, on the assessment schedule have a little tentative assessment update scheduled for 2026, following the usual two-year cycle for striped bass. If you remember, we were supposed to have, after the most recent stock assessment, a benchmark stock assessment in 2019. We were supposed to do an update in '21, '23, '25 and then a benchmark in '27.

Because the 2021 assessment update would have had 2020 as the terminal year, the TC recommended and the Board agreed to push that back a year, so that we could have a non-COVID year as the terminal year, and avoid some of that uncertainty around the 2020 data.

But as a result, we sort of bumped up now into having an assessment technically scheduled for 2026, right in front of this benchmark assessment.

### **CONSIDER WHETHER TO CONDUCT 2026 STOCK ASSESSMENT UPDATE**

DR. DREW: The TC is recommending that this update not be conducted, that we just skip this 2026 update, for a number of reasons. Mainly, the 2026 update would overlap, basically completely with the 2027 benchmark work and that to have the update completed by annual meeting, we would actually need to move up the deadline for our 2025 data, which would put additional pressure on the TC and the SAS with that release of the calibrated numbers, to basically put in a shorter turnaround time to incorporate this new time series into the assessment update.

It's not just a matter of adding a new year of data, we have to redo the whole time series to include those calibrated numbers, and then after all of this work, the 2027 benchmark would be available less than a year later with a potentially new model, potentially new reference point, et cetera. I think the TC questions whether the Board would actually use the information in the 2026 assessment in any way, knowing that a benchmark assessment will be available less than a year later. The TC and the SAS can provide the Board with data checking throughout the benchmark assessment process, so we can provide a summary of removals and the two indices in 2025 and 2026, and we can if the Board is interested provide updated projections with the current model and the uncalibrated data when the 2025 data are available is desired to help the Board sort of check in on progress.

But the TC feels very strongly that doing the 2026 assessment would just be an untenable workload, and the priority should be the

completion of the 2027 benchmark assessment. With that I am happy to take any questions.

CHAIR WARE: The Board action today is whether to make a recommendation on removing that 2026 stock assessment update. If we come to a consensus, I'm hoping we don't need a motion, but we'll get to that point after some questions. Are there any questions for Katie on her presentation? Mike Luisi.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: In reality we're talking about probably a six-month period of time between what would be the result of a 2026 assessment update that would be delivered, let's say in October at an annual meeting, and then the benchmark assessment, which would be the spring of the following year, which is only six months' time. I'm getting nods, so that helps me understand the timing.

DR. DREW: Yes, that's correct.

MR. LUISI: With that understanding I think I would be supportive of following the guidance of the Technical Committee at this point and just waiting until that benchmark. I think that is going to be our next bigger opportunity to have a comprehensive discussion about the state of this resource, and the status of the stock. I think by doing both, we're just going to compound the concerns and confusion, even by the public.

CHAIR WARE: Next I have Joe Cimino.

MR. JOE CIMINO: Not truly a question. I agree with Mike; I worry about the confusion. You know the whole intent of a benchmark is to perhaps bring something new forward. The question part of it would be, just to confirm, there is going to be a continuity run, and that as Mike pointed out, the timeline for that will happen within maybe six to eight months from what we would have seen as an update. But my concern would be the confusion here if the benchmark does pivot in any way, that the

information in that update that the Board got may not be as relevant.

CHAIR WARE: I'm not seeing any other questions. Is there anyone who is uncomfortable or disagrees with the TC recommendation not to conduct that 2026 stock assessment update? Nichola Meserve.

MS. NICHOLA MESERVE: Not opposition to that. I fully support the Technical Committee's recommendation. I did want to ask, I guess, about the prospect of an update immediately after the benchmark assessment. The benchmark is going to have data through 2025, and particularly if we were to change management measures in 2026, having an update sooner rather than later would be of interest, to make sure that we're not in a similar situation, the last assessment where we were making projections about how management measures have impacted our fishery performance.

DR. DREW: Yes, I think if the Board was interested in doing an assessment update in sort of, I guess, almost a federal model of, you have your research track and then you would base management on that immediate subsequent management track or update. I think that is something the Board could definitely consider.

In terms of timeline, I think we would be looking at presenting that update in November or at the annual meeting, instead of, would that be able to have the 2026 data versus say presenting it in, I mean we can present the benchmark when it is available, which would be May or August, but there is no way that we could do an update before November, to include 2026 data.

I think maybe if you get closer to that the Board can think about, do you want to respond based on the 2025 terminal year and some projections based on what we see happen in 2026. Do you want to wait and see, do a real quick update,

which is definitely additional work for the TC after they just went through a benchmark, or there are options for the Board to consider. But it would add additional time to get that 2026 data and add it to the assessment.

CHAIR WARE: Do you have a response, Nichola?

MS. MESERVE: Just to confirm. That is a discussion that we'll have a year or two from now as to when the next assessment would be.

DR. DREW: I mean if you guys have an opinion on that right now and are ready to make a decision you could definitely make that, but I think the schedule is definitely still open, in terms of like what happens after that benchmark. We don't really have anything set in stone at the moment.

MS. MESERVE: Okay, thank you.

DR. DREW: IN terms of when you would like what the drop-dead date would be, I think probably sometime next year would be the latest, just in terms of everybody's understanding, everybody's workload, and kind of what we would need to do coming out of that assessment. I think the focus is going to be 100 percent on the benchmark until we're done with it, but then like knowing for 2027, what do we need to be prepared to talk to you guys about?

Like do you want to see a lot of projections right away, do you want to wait for that update, you know that kind of stuff. Maybe sometime in mid to late 2026, you guys can talk about what you're feeling. I do feel a little bit like you guys are probably not going to want to make the decision until you see the answer, but maybe that is my own cynicism here. I think there is not a hard, necessarily, a hard deadline at this point, but late 2026.

CHAIR WARE: I think what I'm hearing is we can see how Addendum III progresses and help that

inform our decision, so that would be my recommendation. Is there anyone who is opposed to the TC recommendation to not do the 2026 stock assessment update? Seeing no hands, I'm going to take that as a consensus position from the Board to not do that 2026 assessment update. That recommendation will go to the Policy Board tomorrow. Thank you, Katie. We're now going to move on to starting to talk about Addendum III, which is for the 2026 measures.

Emilie is going to review our timeline for that Draft Addendum and highlight some questions for the Board today, and we're hoping to get some feedback for the Plan Development Team, so that we can come back to the May meeting with a fairly solid draft of that Addendum, and continue to get more feedback. I will pass it over to Emilie.

#### **DISCUSS SCOPE OF DRAFT ADDENDUM III FOR 2026 MEASURES**

MS. EMILIE FRANKE: I will jump right in here to talk about Draft Addendum III. I just want to first refresh everyone's memory of the motion that the Board approved a little less than two months ago. Move to initiate an Addendum to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029, in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality, while balancing socioeconomic impacts.

Options should include, if needed, a range of overall reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to the reductions, recreational season and size changes, taking into account regional variability of availability and no harvest versus no targeting closures. Final action should be taken by the annual 2025 meeting, in order to be in place for the 2026 fisheries.

## **REVIEW TIMELINE AND INITIAL SCOPE**

MS. FRANKE: First, I just want to talk about the timeline piece. The motion specified taking final action by the annual meeting, and the Board discussed sort of two potential timelines. The fastest potential timeline would actually be completing the Addendum by August, so in that scenario we're here today in February, where the Board will be providing guidance to the PDT.

## **PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO PLAN DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

MS. FRANKE: Then the PDT can come back to the Board at the spring meeting in May with a Draft Addendum. If the Board approves the Draft Addendum for public comment at that May meeting, we would have public hearings on the public comment in May and June, and then it would come back to the Board in August to select final measures and approve the Addendum.

Alternatively, for taking final action in October, that would provide some more time if the Board had additional guidance or modifications they wanted to see for the Draft Addendum through this process. You know we would start the same way. The PDT would start work after today, come back in the spring with a draft document.

In May, if the Board decides that they would like to see the document modified, the PDT could go back, make the modifications over the summer, and then come back to the Board again in August, with the updated Draft Addendum. The Board could then approve it for public comment in August. You would have public hearings and a comment period in August and September, and then the Board would take action in October.

Those are the two potential timelines here. Then to address the motion, in terms of what the motion specified for the Draft Addendum.

Based on that motion, the PDT has been assembled, and the PDT will look at potential reductions for 2026 based on TC projections that will incorporate preliminary 2024 data. That data from MRIP should be available mid to later this month. The Technical Committee will meet sometime in March to discuss those projections. The projections will continue to use target 50 percent probability of rebuilding, unless the Board indicated otherwise today. Then of course, also according to the motion, the PDT will consider different options for how the sectors would contribute to that reduction.

For any reduction, for any reduction on the commercial side, the PDT would consider commercial quota reductions. For any reductions on the recreational side, the PDT would consider size limit changes and/or season closures, as specified in the motion, both no harvest and no targeting closures.

But today we are requesting some additional guidance from the Board to further narrow the scope of these potential options. I think there was a lot of discussion at the last meeting about, you know the TC report from December had a lot of different options, particularly for seasonal closures. This is a new management tool for the Board, so there is a lot of things to think about with regard to seasonal closures especially, but also for size limits and a couple of other things.

We're hoping today to get some guidance to help the PDT really focus on what the Board wants to see in this Addendum. The first question, these questions were all laid out in a memo to the Board that was in Main Materials, so I'm just going to go over the questions. First is on recreational mode splits.

This topic has come up at the Board in recent management actions, so it would be helpful to know up front if the PDT should be considering mode splits for recreational options, so that we know what we should be looking at. The next set of questions is on recreational size limits.

The first is the Board looking for slot limits or minimum size limits or both.

For any size limit, how small or how large would the Board want to go? For example, is a 2-inch slot feasible? How low do you want to go for the ocean? How large would you want to go for the ocean, that sort of thing. For the ocean size limits as well, is the Board still interested in a small fish analysis or looking at fish under 28 inches for the ocean?

Then also, is the Board's intent here to protect the remaining strong year classes by having size limit options that avoid them? A couple things to think about here in terms of size limits. Then we have several questions on seasonal closures. The first topic, this came up also a lot at the December Board meeting as equity.

What type of equity is the Board looking for in seasonal closures? The TC report in December presented options with equity, in terms of how long each region would close. It sounded like there was some discussion about looking at equity from the perspective of each region having the same percent reduction overall with the closure, even for different lengths, as long as they both have the same estimated percent reduction.

Any guidance folks have on what form of equity you are looking for, in terms of seasonal closures, would be really helpful. There are a couple questions about regions. For ocean seasonal closures the first question is, is the Board still interested in any sort of coastwide closures? There was a lot of discussion in December about the regional closures, so we're wondering if we should just take coastwide closures off the table, and only have regional options, or if the Board was still looking to see a coastwide closure option. Then for the ocean, are there specific regional breakdowns the Board would like to see? The PDT can start with the regional breakdown that the Board discussed in December, and that was Maine through Rhode Island and then Connecticut through North Carolina.

If there are others the Board would specifically like to see, that would be helpful to hear as well. Then there was a question, how small should the regions be? There was some discussion, I think some public comments about perhaps having a single state be its own region. If the Board had any guidance on that, that would also be helpful.

Then the final few questions for seasonal closures are about timing. First, should the PDT consider the options that split a closure reduction between two waves? Instead of closing, for example, for four weeks consecutively to meet a reduction, should we have, you know close two weeks at the beginning of the season, close two weeks at the end of the season, so should we have options like that, that split the closure?

Then also, in terms of the timing. The TC Report presented options that prioritized closures that would be the shortest possible closure to achieve a reduction. Obviously, those closures would take place when the most removals are occurring, so when the fishery is most active. There was some discussion about potential impacts of course of closures, so if there are other timing considerations, you know if the PDT should not only be looking at the shortest possible closures, they should be thinking about other things. That would be helpful to know as well.

Then finally, the last question is, is there anything else that you would like to see in the Addendum. Again, as much guidance as we can get today is helpful. As I mentioned, you know there are a lot of options in the TC Report. I think it would be really helpful for the Board and the PDT if you had any guidance on where to focus this Addendum today. That would be really helpful. That's it, happy to take any questions, and then we can move into discussion.

CHAIR WARE: Great, thanks, Emilie. I'm going to propose we structure the conversation as;

we'll start with any clarifying questions on the presentation. Then I think the best way to approach this is going topic by topic. I'm hoping to avoid motions if we can, although if there is strong opposition from a Board member to an idea, we will move to a motion in that situation.

I do think there is a potential here that we will get a lot of different ideas, so at some point we may need to start prioritizing that. But we will let you know when we need to start doing that. We'll start with any clarifying questions for Emilie. David Borden.

MR. DAVID V. BORDEN: I'm just curious about the socioeconomic impacts. What process and what data are we going to use to do that? That is one question.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, I'll respond to that question first. I have met with the SES members, the reps for striped bass, and in the last few management documents for striped bass, Addendum II and Amendment 7, there was some socioeconomic content, and that was a summary of some past studies that have been done for striped bass. Several years ago, there was, I think a stated preference survey to understand angler preferences for striped bass, so there is some older work for a subset of states, and the management documents typically summarize the sort of major findings from that work. But there is no coastwide dataset to enumerate or quantify the socioeconomic impacts of different management options. You know we will continue to provide that summary of past economic studies that have been done for striped bass, but we're not going to be able to quantify for this option, this has a greater impact in this option.

We have discussed potentially putting together the available MRIP data, so for example directed trips in trying to provide as much information to the Board as we can about what data are available, about directed trips by region by Wave, so the Board can understand

how the fishery is occurring, to sort of potentially consider those impacts of different closures. But at that point it will be mostly a summary of past economic studies and the available MRIP data.

MR. BORDEN: Thanks, Emilie, and then the other question is on the timeline. We're basically talking about a timeline that would result in October implementation. I guess my question is, and I'll direct this to mid-states primarily. Does that timeline accommodate changes in the commercial fisheries? I think it does, but how late can we go? Let's say we get to October, there is a little bit more work that has to be done. How late can we go and still affect the commercial fishery in the mid, is my question.

CHAIR WARE: I'll turn to any of the Mid-Atlantic states or states with commercial fisheries, if they would like to respond to that. Mike Luisi, thank you.

MR. LUISI: Thank you, Madam Chair, I was waiting for somebody else's hand. We talked about this a number of times before. I think October is really the time where a final decision will need to be made. If we wait until November, and try to have a special meeting, that could be doable, but it would be more challenging. Anything in December is a no-go, as far as affecting the upcoming commercial season, which for Maryland starts on January 1st.

Hopefully, we had this discussion in December. Hopefully we're on a path that will have final action either in August or October of this year. If we hold to that timeline, Maryland will have no problem in incorporating any changes to the commercial fishery for the upcoming season, which would be 2026.

CHAIR WARE: I did just confirm the annual meeting this year is the week of October 27th, in case that date is important to folks. Any

other questions before we get into discussion?  
Yes, John Clark.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Thanks, Emilie, I was just curious. I thought it might have come up at the last meeting, but the states that have these like kind of specific fisheries like Delaware summer slot. Would those still be intact with what we had considered, or is that kind of not part of the motion?

MS. FRANKE: It wasn't part of the Board's motion for this Addendum, but the other motion that the PDT was considering for 2025 stated that the Delaware Summer Slot Fishery, the Pennsylvania Spring Fishery and the Hudson River Fishery would have to come up with measures to meet whatever the reduction is. I think a logical starting point for the PDT would be to include similar language for 2026.

CHAIR WARE: Last check of clarifying questions. Okay, not seeing any other hands, we will get into discussion, and we'll go topic by topic here. I think staff has some slides to help guide us through this, again looking for answers to these questions, and if folks are strongly opposed to a suggestion that is made, at that point we'll move to a motion. We're starting with projections. Bill Hyatt, do you have a suggestion on projections?

MR. WILLIAM HYATT: Well, I do have what I think is a relatively easy suggestion or recommendation that doesn't fall within the question list. Is this a good time to bring it up quickly?

CHAIR WARE: Sure.

MR. HYATT: This is a follow up to some of the discussion that took place at the last meeting. At the last meeting you'll recall that we were presented with four spawning stock projections. All four of them converged at the target and all four of them ended at 2029. There were a number of us that asked questions of what things would look like projected out beyond

2029, for the obvious reason that that was influential to our thinking on this issue.

This is just a simple request, and that is that we rerun these striped bass spawning stock biomass projections out to at least 2035, and would request that again, there be four projections done. One of them with low recruitment, mean recruitment equivalent to the last six years, where we've seen extremely low recruitment.

Another scenario where mean recruitment is averaged over the 12-year timeframe, and then each of those with low fishing mortality and moderate fishing mortality applied. Then the hope is and the belief is that this will give those of us around the table and the public with sort of a more realistic understanding of what we're up against here. It is my understanding that this can be relatively easily done.

DR. DREW: That is definitely easily done, I think. You know I would just caution the Board to make sure that we're not overwhelming the document with too much information, but if these scenarios are agreeable to the Board, we can definitely provide you those as part of that. If there going to use kind of changes or modifications or concerns that the Board level was providing that information, you know we can have that discussion. From a technical standpoint it is definitely doable that we can provide that for the PDT to incorporate into the document.

MS. FRANKE: Just for recruitment you mentioned a recent sort of super low recruitment that we've been seeing, and then I think you said average of 12-year recruitment. But I was wondering if you were maybe thinking about the low recruitment assumption we used for the assessment, which is basically 2008 forward, or if you had a specific timing you were thinking of.

MR. HYATT: Most important from my way of thinking is that one of the projections had to be

built off of what we're seeing over the last six years. As far as the other, you know I picked 12 years as an average, just to bring that up a bit, but if there is a better number, we would certainly want that to be used.

MS. FRANKE: Thanks, Bill, and just one other follow-up. For these additional projections, are you thinking these would be sensitivity runs and sort of the TC and PDT would have, I guess essentially, you know these could be four different projections with maybe four different potential reductions for 2026.

Just thinking about sort of, are these just sensitivity runs to whatever the TC and PDT sort of identify as sort of the reduction scenario and these are sort of sensitivities around that, or are you looking for options for potentially a couple different reductions?

MR. HYATT: I believe the answer is, these are sensitivity runs. I was not looking for them to build in various management decisions into these.

CHAIR WARE: Joe Cimino.

MR. CIMINO: I have a level of discomfort with that. We have any number of species. I'm thinking of cobia, where at some point the projections are just, I guess unhelpful. I appreciate Bill's concern, but the idea that we're giving someone a realistic picture ten years out, with all these assumptions that kind of de-evolve year after year. I'm just kind of concerned that the idea is we're helping the situation, when we might be not getting a more realistic picture.

CHAIR WARE: The question is, can you live with it come May, so if the answer to that question is no, I would recommend you make a motion.

MR. CIMINO: Katie, do you feel at this point you could give, or is that something that you feel you need to look into a little bit. Then my suggestion would be, can you please look into it

a little bit. If you feel you could give an answer now.

DR. DREW: I guess I would just say, for sure there are elements of this that we will not have a good handle on, mainly fishing mortality. We're struggling with what is going to happen next year or the year after that, let alone where are things going to be in ten years? But I will say for striped bass, they are a little more unique than some of our fish species, which is that they do take so long to mature.

Ten years out is basically when some of these really poor year classes will finally be in the SSB. Right now, our rebuilding deadline and our rebuilding trajectory is supported by the 2018 and the 2015-year classes, and the recent really 2020 forward low recruitment that we've seen, has not had a chance to percolate through to the SSB yet, because they are not mature yet.

Basically, that ten years out is this series of poor recruits finally maturing into the SSB, and what does that say about, you know what is the trajectory after we get to 2029, which I think is part of the concern here is that we are rebuilding on the basis of one very strong and one above average year class, and if we were so focused on 2029, what is going to happen after 2029 for this stock? What does it mean when we get to be rebuilt, is where I think some of this concern is coming from. I think I would agree that there is certainly uncertainty around that. But striped bass is a little unique in that there is a longer lag between the poor recruitment we see now, and kind of when that will get past the SSB down the road. I don't know if that helps or not, but that is sort of my perspective.

MR. CIMINO: Well, thank you, very much appreciate that. I won't oppose this, but I think each of us should use a level of caution as these are given to us.

CHAIR WARE: One more clarification for you.

DR. DREW: Just to say like, these projections, as you just discussed, will not affect, or like we did similar projections, similar sensitivity runs, and like your probability are the reductions that you need, et cetera. That was not strongly affected by that 2029 deadline. This is just going to be what is going out beyond it, so it should not affect the management options that we will be presenting or any of those analyses. It's more just about some context for what the potential trajectory after the 2029 date is. Did that help or does not help?

CHAIR WARE: We are talking about projections, Board guidance and projections, any other Board guidance? Yes, Chris Batsavage.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Something for the Board to consider for projections is maybe including a 60 percent probability of rebuilding the stock, so looking at options for meeting that in the short term. Not replace the 50 percent, but see what it looks like at 60 percent.

MS. FRANKE: Just to clarify, are you looking for one set of options for a 50 percent probability reduction and then a second set of options for a 60 percent probability reduction?

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes. I think to kind of account for, I think some inherent management uncertainty we'll be facing, depending on what other options we include in this Addendum. The 60 percent probability provides a little buffer of actually rebuilding the stock. At least the 50 percent, we aim for 60 and hope for at least 50.

CHAIR WARE: Any other Board guidance on projections? Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: Not projections, but to the point of these different ranges of options for the different scenarios and probabilities. The way that the TC structured the options in the potential Board action memo allowed for the Board, there was different percentages all throughout the reductions.

The Board could pull from some places to achieve various reductions. I was just going to make a suggestion that it be presented similarly to the prior analyses, so that the Board has that flexibility. If we make a determination on one projection or another, you know it provided a way for the Board to kind of pick and choose a little bit.

CHAIR WARE: We're going to move on to recreational mode splits, and I think the question here is, what is our guidance to the Plan Development Team on recreational mode splits in the development of management options? Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: My preference would be to exclude mode split options from Draft Addendum III. We recently considered them in Draft Addendum II and did not adopt them, they had limited public support at the time. There are many commenters who supported equal opportunities across the recreational mode, as well as equal participation in rebuilding the stock.

I don't think that now is the time for us to be considering carve outs during the rebuilding time period. The Law Enforcement Committee also spoke to how mode splits erode compliance and enforcement. There are a number of reasons that I think this is one area we could slim down the potential range of options, in hopes of getting to final action by August or October if necessary. Based on the discussion, I do want to make that in a motion, if necessary.

CHAIR WARE: I saw Mike Luisi, do you want to comment on that?

MR. LUISI: Unsurprisingly to many of you, I kind of think the opposite of what Nichola just presented. It was a year ago now when we convened here as a Board, and it was decided at that time that mode splits were not going to be something that would be allowed in the

recreational fishery. The state of Maryland did just that.

We moved around from mode splits and implemented a one-fish bag limit for all of our anglers. The consequences of that action have been dire. When I look at the motion that is before us today about the initiation of this Addendum. The Addendum was initiated in consideration of the 2024 recreational and commercial mortality, while balancing socioeconomic impacts.

Those socioeconomic impacts are absolutely real. One decision made a really big difference in my state. You'll hear numbers that will be presented as part of public comment, I'm sure, as this Addendum continues to develop. We're looking at 60, 70, 80 percent down on trips in the charterboat community in the state of Maryland, and it has been a really, really difficult thing to try to overcome.

While I realize we had this debate only a year ago, I think that I also came to the conclusion in my mind at the meeting last year that this conversation about mode splits goes another step beyond considering conservation. This is more of a philosophical type of discussion about equity and what is the right thing to do.

I feel like the public should have another opportunity through this Addendum, since it is being developed based on the challenges of 2024 and the socioeconomic impacts is one of the things that we're supposed to be focusing on. I don't know how we don't have that as a follow up discussion, based on the changes that occurred and the impacts that happened as a result of it. I feel like we should have this as part of the Addendum, and I would support mode splits being incorporated into this plan.

CHAIR WARE: Next I have Jay. I'm sensing we'll do a motion on this, but we'll offer some discussion to start. Go ahead, Jay.

DR. JASON McNAMEE: I also support keeping mode splits in there. I guess as I started thinking about it though, and kind of the continuum now of, now if we're doing 50 percent and 60 percent that is a quick doubling of the central options. We make these documents really difficult for the public really quickly, trying to make inflexibility. I think we're doing it for a good reason, but. I guess what I was wondering is, do we have to be for the modes, say we do a couple of mode split options.

Do we have to be explicit, like the options that show up in the Addendum. Is that what has to be done in the end, or is there flexibility with that? I guess what I'm getting at is, there may be a way to kind of shrink down a number of options by just offering some middling option, but then allowing during the public process, or when we come back to the Board, allowing that to move away from what was explicit in the Addendum. I guess I just have that question posed to you, but in the end, I would like to see the mode split stay in the document.

MS. FRANKE: In response to your question, I think maybe you're referring to if we included some sort of range of options the Board could go between, I guess in terms of seeing the math, the analysis for a particular option. The Draft Addendum would be, I think very explicit about, here's this option and this potential reduction. I mean there could be a range of options without that analysis, but in order to have that analysis attached to it with a potential reduction with this particular combination. I think it would have to be pretty explicit.

For example, the Board could say, you know we're only looking at mode splits for size limits, or only looking at mode splits for season closures. The Board could sort of say, for certain types of options we want a mode split. That could help narrow it, but I think if you want to see a percent reduction attached to an option, you have to be pretty explicit about what the option is.

CHAIR WARE: All right, so I've heard different opinions here. At this point I've heard support from two people for the mode splits. If that is not something you can live with or you strongly oppose, this would be your opportunity to make a motion. Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: I would **move to exclude recreational mode split options from Draft Addendum III.**

CHAIR WARE: let's give staff a second to put that up, and then we'll look for a second. All right, so we have a motion to exclude recreational mode split options from Draft Addendum III. Is there a second to that motion? Chris Batsavage. Nichola, I know you provided some comments, any additional rationale?

MS. MESERVE: Not at this time, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Chris, as the seconder, do you have any rationale you would like to flag?

MR. BATSAVAGE: Nichola covered everything, thanks.

CHAIR WARE: Is there any other discussion on this motion? Eric Reid.

MR. ERIC REID: I'll be brief. I do agree with Mr. Luisi and Dr. McNamee. This is not only about saving striped bass, it's saving a longstanding tradition of the way of life, which is the for-hire sector, and it would be really unfortunate if that happened. The numbers that Mr. Luisi spoke about in decline; I think those are probably underestimated at some point, so I would oppose this motion for sure.

CHAIR WARE: Jeff Kaelin.

MR. JEFF KAE LIN: I'm going to oppose this also. I think we're working on considering mode splits in the recreational sector separation data collection amendment or addendum right now with fluke, scup and black sea bass here at the Commission, at the Council. I think that we

ought to leave this option in for this striped bass addendum. I'm opposed to the motion, personally.

CHAIR WARE: Any other discussion on the motion? Yes, Bill Hyatt.

MR. HYATT: I have a question. I know that a few years back, and I think we had a workgroup on mode splits. I am embarrassed to say that I cannot remember the outcome of that workgroup, what happened. I wasn't personally involved, but I would just be curious if somebody could refresh my memory.

CHAIR WARE: We're going to go to the Executive Director for that.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: Yes, thanks, Bill. You are right, it was a working group and at the same time we were working on de minimis and allocation. We had about, if only Spud was in here, he was Chair. We had like four different working groups going on at the same time, and the Policy Board prioritized the other work over mode splits, because the Mid-Atlantic Council was working through their process of recreational reform.

Our Board and the Mid-Atlantic Council were working together on it, and one of those provisions in the recreational reform work was mode splits. We stepped back from our working group and let the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Board and the Mid-Atlantic Council move forward, and they are still working on that. That group never really completed its task here at the Commission.

MR. HYATT: Thank you, Bob, I'm not as forgetful as I had feared.

CHAIR WARE: Marty Gary.

MR. MARTIN GARY: Like Maryland, well like Mike, and Eric from Rhode Island, Joe, our for-hire sector has been strongly advocating to

explore mode splits, so I'm also going to be opposed to this motion.

CHAIR WARE: All right, seeing no other hands, I'm going to do a one-minute caucus, because I know states have some folks online, so we'll do a one-minute caucus then come back and vote. Okay, I appreciate everyone's patience, particularly with Maine, as we might have been the last ones here. Is everyone ready to vote on this? We'll first see those in favor of the motion, so that would be excluding mode split options, raise your hand.

MS. FRANKE: Okay, **in favor of the motion I have Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia.**

CHAIR WARE: **All those opposed.**

MS. FRANKE: Okay, **opposed I have Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, D.C., PRFC, Maryland, Delaware, Maine, and that's it.**

CHAIR WARE: **Any abstentions?**

MS. FRANKE: **For abstentions I have NOAA Fisheries and New Hampshire and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.**

CHAIR WARE: **Any null votes? Motion fails 4 to 9 with 3 abstentions.** This is including mode split options in the Draft Addendum III.

MS. FRANKE: One further clarification now that we have mode splits for the PDT To consider. Does the Board have any guidance about where you want to see these mode split options? I heard Mr. Luisi talk about the bag limit, potentially for a mode split option. Are there other types? Are you looking for mode split options for size limits, different size limits for different modes? Are you looking for different seasons for different modes? If you have any other thoughts at this time that would be helpful.

CHAIR WARE: Any thoughts for the Plan Development Team on further guidance on mode splits? Yes, Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: I just wanted to clarify. The motion to initiate this Addendum does not consider recreational possession limit changes, so you just raised that Emilie as a potential place for a mode split. But in my understanding of the motion that initiated this Addendum, possession limit changes are not in the Draft Addendum.

MS. FRANKE: Thanks, Nichola. I'm just going to read that part, this is the motion Nichola is referring to, it is the motion from the December Board meeting. It says that options should include, if needed, a range of overall reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to the reductions, recreational season and size limit changes, taking into account regional availability. The motion does not specify possession limit changes, but it says option to include, so I think it's potentially open.

MS. MESERVE: That is not my understanding of the motion that I voted for back in December. I thought it was pretty specific as to what was included here, and it does not include changes to the bag limit.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: It's up to the Board. You know if the Board feels this motion has some room for changes to possession limits or other things, and then they can do that. I think the way these motions usually work is this is kind of a starting point, and we bring things back.

More questions back from the Plan Development Team, and that is kind of where we are. If the Board wants to change some things through another motion, they have the flexibility to do that. It's up to the Board, more than a staff interpretation it's the Board's interpretation of how they want to handle it.

CHAIR WARE: I think one approach, Nichola, is we have a topic of other measures, we can bring possession limits up under that topic if you would like. All right, any other discussion on mode splits? Yes, Roy Miller.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: Very quickly, I can see considering mode splits for daily harvest limits, but I really fail to understand the reason for mode splits with regard to size limits.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Roy, Jay.

DR. McNAMEE: Yes, this sort of in response to Roy, not helpful to you guys. I think the idea would be, just to offer an example. I think often party and charter for-hire, whatever, they will often lean towards a larger fish, because they can pursue those fish, they know where they are. What they might want to do, if there is an option with a really constrained season, they might opt into a much larger fish to get a reduction from that and keep the season open. It's sort of why I said what I said earlier. You shouldn't listen to me for like what they might want.

I'm just offering you things that I've heard. But I would think you would want to keep minimum sizes in the mix. I wonder if there was a way to get some feedback, if the PDT could reach out to some party and charter operations to get some feedback on things they might like to see. I don't know that we're going to be able. We probably should have done that before this meeting, but I'm trying to find a way to narrow things down for you guys but keep this in there. I don't have a good way to do that.

CHAIR WARE: All right, I saw Matt Gates, Roy Miller and then we're going to move on to the next topic.

MR. MATTHEW GATES: Yes, I think I'm sure Jay covered most of what I want to say. The only additional thing, I wasn't really interested in pursuing the possession limit or the bag limit change. I think my primary thought was the

season for the mode split, but definitely not a possession limit.

CHAIR WARE: Roy Miller, you get the last bite of the apple on this.

MR. MILLER: Just very quickly, thinking about other examples of mode splits, with regard to size limits. The only one I can think of right off the top of my head was summer flounder. A couple of states, I think it was New Jersey and Connecticut have a smaller size limit for shore-based fishermen catching summer flounder. That is the only example I can think of, and I'm not sure that that even correlates with what we're talking about, in terms of striped bass.

CHAIR WARE: I think we've had a good discussion on mode splits here. I am going to move us on to our next topic, which is the recreational size limits, and there were several questions in the PDT memo to the Board. Those are up on the screen now, so I'll let folks read this, but looking for any guidance on recreational size limit options. Doug Grout.

MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT: I would like to include both slot limits and a couple of minimum size limits. I still would like to have explored a lower slot limit that would be no larger, or a minimum of at least three inches in width. You could have it at whatever width, but as far as how low it would go; I would like to have it targeted away from the existing spawning stock biomass.

This would be for coastal size limits or slot limits. I can give an example of 20 to 26, but if the TC and PDT look and see that, well to protect our last spawning stock strong year class we have to go down lower. I would like to see what the analysis would be for that. As far as large minimum size limits, I would say anywhere between 36 and 40. I think that covers it for size limits on the coast.

MS. FRANKE: Just clarifying that the PDT will pursue that analysis for the less than 28 inches for the ocean as a slot. I'll do that.

CHAIR WARE: Joe Cimino.

MR. CIMINO: A question, I mean hasn't that already been done? Haven't we had kind of a recommendation that that is a bad idea?

DR. DREW: The TC did some preliminary analyses with this, and felt that showed that going down to a lower size limit in the ocean or lower slot in the ocean would increase removals, and I think we got a lot of public comment that people had concerns about the analysis. This was an analysis that the TC had not really tried before.

I think maybe what the Board could consider is if you would like to see if we could do some more due diligence on this topic, so that we can refine our methods, as far as either verify or find out that we were wrong originally, and see if we can get a reduction out of this. I think the TC has some plans to develop these methods further, to get a better handle on what those reductions would look like.

Maybe even revisit some other assumptions that Board members and the public had concerns about, so we can kind of refine this approach. But it was initially, the initial analysis was not promising, in terms of getting a reduction, and that was even before we consider, you know the potential loss of spawning potential by focusing harvest on small fish.

MR. CIMINO: Yes, just a follow, I appreciate that. I guess folks don't realize this, but as New Jersey goes through calculations for what the Striped Bass Bonus Program would look like. We've reviewed this within the state, and obviously we're talking about a state with a lot of fishing power. That loss of spawning potential is pretty intense, so basically the penalties of that have always kept us away from

this. I do worry that we've already had some suggestions that this is not good. New Jersey has explored this, and you know we're a pretty considerable player, that out of the things that we could cut out, I think we should really consider not looking at this once again.

CHAIR WARE: I'm hearing some differing opinions on exploring a slot under 28 inches. Any other Board discussion on that? Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: I agree with Joe. I have a lot of concerns about going to that smaller slot limit. I would also remind the Board that our Advisory Panel, which hardly agrees on anything altogether, it's usually 9 to 9, 9 to 8 type votes. This is the one issue that they were unanimous on, I believe, when they talked about it for a Board action item. I don't support our looking at it in this Draft Addendum.

CHAIR WARE: Doug Grout, do you want another comment on this?

MR. GROUT: Yes, just a follow up on that. You know the main purpose of this, we have spawning stock biomass that is going to start shrinking in size. Protecting smaller fish that are always very weak in strength is also, if you start targeting those your catches, they have to go down. Yes, there will be an impact on that three inch or whatever size limit.

But I think we've got to do our best at the situation that we are in right now, at least consider a smaller slot limit on the coast. Now, if it comes up after the TC's analysis that this just is a totally bad idea I'm fine. But the original analysis was originally done very rapidly, and I appreciate them taking the time when we've given them a huge workload to try and come up with something.

But it wasn't using some of the current length frequencies that we have in the Volunteer Angler Survey Programs. If they could use that, which is more what is in the system right now,

as opposed to what happened back in, what was the timeframe year using, like 2008?

DR. DREW: We were using 2018 as a proxy for when the 2011-year class was 7 years old.

MR. GROUT: Right, that is what I am trying to get is a new analysis using the more current empirical data that we have, as to what the impacts might be.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so we have an ask from a Board member to include a slot limit less than 28 inches. If this is something someone cannot live with, or is strongly opposed to, now would be the time for a motion. Joe Cimino.

MR. CIMINO: I would move to remove this as an option from this Addendum. I appreciate what you said, and I do think the idea that it needs to be, well the idea that a better analysis would be helpful is important. But we know going forward, when we get past this benchmark that the whole idea of what striped bass management is, is going to change. That may be a better time to have that discussion than in this interim, I think. I would move to have this removed from this current Amendment.

CHAIR WARE: I'm just going to have staff put that up on the board, then I'll have you read it into the record. All right, do you want to read that in, Joe?

MR. CIMINO: Yes, thank you. **Move to not include options for an ocean recreational size limit under 28 inches in Draft Addendum III.**

CHAIR WARE: Do we have a second to that motion? Nichola Meserve. Joe, do you want to provide any rationale or are you good? Nichola? Yes, go for it.

MS. MESERVE: Overall I am a little bit hesitant about any changes to the size limits right now in this Draft Addendum. The Technical Committee had some pretty strong words about how the

changes in the selectivity are adding uncertainty to the work that they are doing to the stock assessment for the projections.

I hesitate to have much drastic movement in the size limits at this point, in terms of, you know compliance and enforcement as well. But if we can narrow it down to a reasonable set of options that exclude this. I think that is at least a step towards a little bit more certainty.

CHAIR WARE: Any more discussion on this motion? Jay.

DR. McNAMEE: Yes, just quickly. I'm going to support the motion here, not that I didn't appreciate Doug's reasoning. But I think there is an added element here that is concerning to me, and that is kind of focusing the fishery now on sub-mature fish or a high proportion of sub-mature fish seems like, I don't know it adds a lot of uncertainty that we're not going to know for some period of time, so it doesn't seem like a good idea. I am going to support the motion.

CHAIR WARE: Seeing no other hands, we'll do a one-minute caucus again, and the negative motions are for this, so I'll just say a motion in favor is to not include a slot limit under 28 inches, a motion opposed would include that, so one-minute caucus. All right, is everyone ready? Again, I think as we move forward, we're going to try and avoid negative motions, because they are very confusing.

But again, a motion in favor does not include a slot limit under 28 inches, a motion opposed would include a slot limit under 28 inches. That is my fault, Joe, but we'll move forward, not with negative motions. Okay, so everyone is ready to vote. Those in favor, please raise your hand.

MS. FRANKE: Okay, **in favor I have Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, D.C., PRFC, Maryland, Delaware and Maine.**

**CHAIR WARE:** All those opposed.

**MS. FRANKE:** Opposed I have New Hampshire.

**CHAIR WARE:** Any abstentions?

**MS. FRANKE:** Abstentions, I have NOAA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**CHAIR WARE:** Any null votes? All right, the motion passes 13 to 1 with 2 abstentions. Is there any other discussion on rec size limits?

**MS. FRANKE:** Just one clarification. I heard a suggestion from Doug about only looking at slot limits that are three inches, nothing below, did I misinterpret that?

**MR. GROUT:** I was saying that we shouldn't have a slot limit less than three inches, but it could go larger or whatever.

**MS. FRANKE:** Great, thank you for clarifying. The PDT your suggestion would not look at any two-inch slot limits, for example. Okay, I'm just clarifying that suggestion is out on the table, and was wondering if any Board members had differing suggestions. Otherwise, the PDT is not going to look at any two-inch slots.

**CHAIR WARE:** Okay, I think we are in consensus on that. Thanks for that discussion, we're now going to move on to recreational season closures, and again there is another slide with questions. Looking for Board guidance, a lot of different actions we had at the December Commission meeting for striped bass. Doug Grout, do you want to start us off?

**MR. GROUT:** One of the concepts when we're talking about equity, I know a lot of times we're going to be looking at, okay what is the reduction in harvest and combined with what's the reduction of catch and release mortality as a percentage. One concept that I would like to see if the Board would be willing to explore, particularly if we start going down the road of no target, is the concept that when people are

recreational fishing, they are out for a recreational fishing opportunity, whether we have a catch and release fishery or if we have a one-fish per day.

In some cases, the availability of striped bass in certain states is much shorter than in other states. For example, in the state of New Hampshire, if we put in a one-month no target closure, that is a 25 percent reduction in the ability to go fishing for striped bass. Quite frankly, in our state there probably isn't a lot of alternatives during the summer other than mackerel, and they're overfished too.

You compare that to some states that may have the availability of striped bass in their waters up to 10 months. If they take a one-month closure for no targeting, that is only a 10 percent reduction in the ability to go fishing for striped bass. I would like that concept, if the rest of the Commission would support this, at least put in the document as a type of analysis that would say, this is what would more equity might be in fishing opportunities. Am I clear on that? I'm not sure.

**CHAIR WARE:** Those on the webinar, we were just having a discussion at the head of the table.

**MS. FRANKE:** Sorry, we were just having a sidebar to clarify what you were thinking. You're thinking, looking at options where, I guess for regions, let's say a region typically their average season is a couple months, and for another region their average season is 10 months. You're looking at closing the same proportion of their season, so like 25 percent of the northern region season and closing 25 percent of the southern region season.

**MR. GROUT:** Yes, and also there has been talk in the previous Addendum of looking at the state-by-state impact too, of the reductions we're looking at, just like we're looking at reductions in harvest and catch and release mortality. We should also be looking, particularly with the concept of no target

closures. What is the impact, the percent reduction in the ability to go fishing, because they are going to be different between states?

MS. FRANKE: Just to clarify, you're looking for, you know if the Addendum had regional closures, obviously the Addendum would show the percent reduction in each region, but you would also be looking for some context. What does that mean, also state-by-state?

MR. GROUT: Yes.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so we have one concept of equity from Doug, other hands. Joe.

MR. CIMINO: I apologize to Doug more than anyone, but I think what he's describing kind of gets towards conservation equivalency, which was killed. I hope just not at this time, but I think that is kind of the discussion that is being proposed.

MS. FRANKE: I guess to Joe and Doug's comments, for me to clarify. I guess one question is, are either of you proposing state-by-state closures, or Doug, are you proposing still looking at regional closures, but understanding just having the calculations next to it showing the impact by state, or were you looking for state-by-state closures?

MR. GROUT: No, I wasn't looking for state-by-state closures at all. I just was looking at in the analysis, what is going to be the impact from a state-by-state basis? Just as I've heard asked in the previous Addendum that we needed to look at what is the impact on harvest and catch and release mortality on a state-by-state basis, even if they're in a big region?

MS. FRANKE: Was that helpful, Joe? Okay. The PDT will look at regional options and look at the percent reductions, for example, and each region sort of on the side provide also the state-by-state reductions for context.

CHAIR WARE: Adam Nowalsky.

MR. ADAM NOWALSKY: I completely understand, Doug, what you're talking about with regards to differing levels of equity. It is easy for us to sit here and say, everybody is going to make a similar level of contributions to conservation. Everybody is going to take a 10 percent cut; we're going to achieve that by changing size or limiting seasons or whatever it is. But a similar change in contribution to conservation does not mean equity in all levels, including access. In Doug's example he was saying, if you implemented a one-month ocean closure, that would eliminate 25 percent of its seasonal access, while in other states it might only be a 10 percent limit on their seasonal access. Most people would probably look at that and say wow, you took 25 percent of my access to the fishery away, while you only took 10 percent of his away, regardless of what that max act would be on paper as a percent on pounds, SSB, F.

That is very different impact. The challenge here, I think, for the PDT in this, is that it is not just limited to a state or regional level, it exists in comparison for modes, shore-based angler, private boat anglers, for-hire anglers. This challenge exists within modes, within those that are truly interested in access to the resource from a sport perspective, versus those that are interested in it from a harvest perspective.

The challenge here to the PDT, you're looking for additional definitions of equity. The original motion that the Board passed talked about socioeconomic or other factors. This is what I think ultimately, we're looking for solutions for; to initially say we want everybody to provide an equal contribution to conservation.

That is our starting point for equity. But then we have to look at, what does this do in terms of access and the economics of those fishermen, the retailers, the area boat sales. You get a more comprehensive picture of what that equity is. This is support for what you're saying, Doug. This builds upon it a little bit, and I hope this gives some more context about what

I hope options can ultimately be in this Addendum, to say, we considered this in the name of equity.

MS. FRANKE: I'm going to just quickly respond. I think that is helpful, maybe for the PDT in terms of a place to start. We have this concept of maybe an equal reduction by region, but then if we look at, for example, how long the seasons are or what the availability is like for different regions, sort of try to take that into account.

Maybe that is a different option, and then maybe you have an option that is looking at, you know we have the data for MRIP directed trips, so what portion of directed trips are occurring within a particular season closure. Maybe that sort of gets at the socioeconomic point as well. Maybe sort of the PDT can look at a few different sorts of concepts of equity here, and come back to the Board with what they've discussed.

CHAIR WARE: Dennis.

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: Everything you said, Adam, I agree with. But looking at the situation that we have in New Hampshire, this is somewhat similar to what we talked about in lobsters, the effect that it has on people. In our state, where we have such a short fishing season, a month closure might prompt people to stop fishing, might stop people from buying boats.

They might say that, you know if they are going to lose June and July fishing, what is the point? They don't have a lot of alternatives. I've heard people speak about that. You know it would have a devastating effect on the amount of people that are going fishing, which would be good for conservation, but not good for their economics or the pleasure of people who enjoy recreational fishing. It's a tough nut to consider, but I think that it is worth considering.

CHAIR WARE: I would like to have the Board focus a little bit on some of the seasonal options, in terms of like a coastwide season, state-by-state season. We heard no state-by-state from one Board member, regional. I think there were a lot of different options at the December Striped Bass Board meeting, and that would be helpful guidance for the PDT. Nichola, you want to work on that?

MS. MESERVE: I'll try, I think there are a lot of topics there to cover. Generally, the historical approach for striped bass management has been one of coastwide consistency as much as possible. We have the same size limits and bag limits along the coast right now. That is really difficult when it comes to seasonal closures though, because of the migration of this fish.

But generally, my interest is in the largest regions as possible that achieves enough equity for us to live with, while balancing consistency across adjacent border states, so that measures don't differ between many states when it comes to closures, because that will erode the conservation benefit if you can go to the neighboring state and fish, when you can't in your own state, as well as compliance and enforcement as well.

Generally, the smallest number of regions as possible. I think that a coastwide closure is nearly off the table, unless it were split between two different waves, so that it does impact different regions differently. I think that might be one way to consider a uniform set of closures along the coast where one hits the north in one way and one hits the south in another way.

But that doesn't speak to my support for the PDT to consider closures that do split between two waves. I did have interest in exploring the Maine through Rhode Island and then Connecticut south regions that we discussed at the last Board meeting, and I am opposed to having a single state be a region.

CHAIR WARE: Other Board guidance on the topic of recreational season closures. Joe.

MR. CIMINO: I appreciate Nichola's comments, I know she has listened to this quite a bit. I appreciate that Rhode Island was moved. I am curious, to folks south of New Jersey, I do worry about what the idea of a Delaware south reduction would mean. The idea of a season that works for Connecticut all the way down.

I'm just curious on input there. I don't want to put into it, I could absolutely live with Connecticut south. I think Connecticut through New Jersey especially the vast majority of fish in that New York/New Jersey area, I think we need very much to be on the same page. Just curious what happens south of us, and if there are thoughts about a difference even.

CHAIR WARE: To summarize what I heard is, probably coastwide is a no go, unless it is a split between two waves. I've not heard any support for a single state closure, so each state having a different season. I've heard support for the regional options that were explored in December; Maine through Rhode Island, Connecticut south, and then Joe proposing maybe splitting up that southern region into two. Any other thoughts on this? I'm sure I've missed something, but that is kind of what I've heard. Marty.

MR. GARY: I think if you go around the table everybody will give you their perspective on what region works best. Selfishly, from New York's perspective, I think Connecticut, because we found each other on the side of Long Island Sound. I think I totally agree with Joe. That fall run of fish, at least for now, spatially they're inhabiting Wave 6 in our waters, and we have to be together. I think I would advocate for a region Connecticut to New Jersey to be included in this.

CHAIR WARE: Anything else?

MS. FRANKE: I think the only question left on this slide that hasn't been explicitly addressed is the last bullet. This is the sort of assumption. You know the TC Report with all the options operate on the assumption that you are trying to find the shortest closure possible to achieve the reduction. But that does mean the closure would occur during the peak of fishing activity.

If the Board has any concerns about that or recommendations for other ways to see if you should think about it, beside saving the most number of fish, the most fish per day, it will be helpful. Otherwise, I think the PDT would proceed with looking at the shortest possible closures to get you the reduction.

CHAIR WARE: Doug, Roy Miller and then we're going to move on to the last topic.

MR. GROUT: I would hope that that would not be the only option, the shortest possible closure. I would hope that there would be some other options that may be a little bit longer. But clearly, the shortest possible closure in some places might be July. While we could accomplish the same thing in different parts of the season.

CHAIR WARE: Roy Miller, last comment on this.

MR. MILLER: I'm just remembering when we had to institute mid-summer closures for summer flounder, it was grossly unpopular. You wouldn't believe some of the calls we got at our office and some of the threats we received. The reason was, you've taken those two weeks and you've done away with my vacation recreation, because that is when we go on vacation.

What I'm saying is, a closure in July or August may have a vastly different socioeconomic impact than a closure in April, for instance. We need to keep that in mind. I guess I agree with the comment that the shortest possible closure doesn't capture it all. I think we need more flexibility than that.

CHAIR WARE: Marty Gary, one more bite at the apple here?

MR. GARY: Again, we could dice the regions up as much as possible, but I did mess it up a little bit. In a perfect world we do have the Block Island Transit Area, which is challenging. But I also realize probably Maine south to Mass might make a similar argument to have Rhode Island in their region. I don't know if it's too much to try to look at both of those scenarios or not, but maybe a recalibrated region would be Rhode Island to Jersey.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to move us on to Other Measures. This would be possession limits, if folks want to talk about that. I've heard other Board members with some ideas as well, so this is an attempt at that discussion. Okay, Nichola then Mike.

MS. MESERVE: I have a new topic that is not the possession limit, so I don't know if you want to deal with that issue first or not.

CHAIR WARE: I'll take whatever topic you have.

MS. MESERVE: I have a topic to introduce, I would like to include an option that standardizes the method of taking a total length measurement for striped bass for compliance with the size limits. As we all know, the FMP establishes total length as our method of measurement for striped bass, but it doesn't really define how that measurement is taken.

What I mean is that the caudal fin, the tail, in some of our regulations it says we pinch the tail, in some of them it says you leave it natural. What we have found in our state, we started to get reports of this. Once a maximum size is put in place in the recreational fishery, is that because of the way that our rule is kind of vague about pinching the tail or not, the anglers are forcibly fanning out the tail, in order to keep it in the slot limit.

We actually did some sampling in the fall, sampled hundreds of striped bass for a pinch tail measurement, a natural tail measurement and then a fanned tail measurement, and found that you could take almost a 32.5-inch striped bass and get it into the slot limit by fanning out that tail. I've looked at some of the state rules, and the majority of the states do either seem to have it in their regulations or in your recreational fishing guides that the method of measurement should be a pinched tail, but it's not uniform.

DMF has initiated a rulemaking for this year to go to that pinch tail measurement for striped bass, but it is consistent. I believe that is also how samples are measured for commercial market sampling in our states, so I think it would be most consistent with the stock assessment and provide for uniformity along the coast.

Now particularly as the focus on the size limits in striped bass is this key to our management, our conservation approach right now. I think that this difference has an opportunity to really erode the conservation benefit of our size limit. I would like to include this as something for the Plan Development Team to consider standardizing the method of measurement of total length.

CHAIR WARE: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I have an idea. It's something that has been rumbling around in my head for a while. After the last meeting when we decided not to take action, and we decided as a Board to begin to work on an Addendum. I started to think back over the last 10 years, and all of the different actions that we've taken as a Board and as states.

When I go back and look and do that review, in the state of Maryland since 2015, we have taken 8 different regulatory actions, either to reduce size limits or increase size limits, or implement seasonal closures. We have no

harvest closures, we have no targeting closures, catch and release seasons, harvest seasons all throughout the 365 days that makes up a year in the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. The combination of all of those rules as they have stacked upon themselves over the past 10 years, has gotten us to the point where we think that this Addendum is an opportunity for us.

Not just Maryland, but for other states to potentially take a step back and consider whether or not a new baseline could be developed that would be initiated through this Addendum, and would carry on as that new baseline moving forward through the benchmark assessment and forward. What I mean by a baseline is a consideration of the different types of effort controls that we have in place.

We have catch and release or no harvest seasons. We have no targeting seasons and we have harvest seasons all scattered throughout as I mentioned. What we would like to do as a state is to hit pause for a second, work internally, so the request of the Board to consider with this idea, would not put any additional work at this time on the Plan Development Team.

My team back at work would work on trying to develop this new baseline, for which we could carry things forward. The reason why I think this is important, and something that we should be thinking about, and I'm hoping that the Board would approve, I guess you could say, our state working on this and developing its own. It would basically be another section within the Addendum that would address the establishment of a baseline.

I think it's important that we as managers respond to new information. There was some really great work done over the past few years, Massachusetts catch and release mortality study that we've heard presented to this group.

We also have the working group that was looking at discard mortality in the fishery.

As we've applied all of these different rule changes over time, I think we can do a better job in our state protecting the resource by implementing those effort controls in a way that is more meaningful than the way they are currently outlined in our regulations. I've spoken to Megan and a handful of you over the last couple of weeks, kind of pitching this concept of being able to do this work and present it back to the Board in May, before it goes out to the public.

What we would not be discussing with this baseline readjustment are things like our slot limit. Our slot limit, we would want to maintain that consistency with the other Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions. Whatever seasonal changes that might be required through Addendum III, they would be added on to the new baseline, rather than adding more to the last 10 years of piecing things together.

I hope that this Board, with the discussions that we've had today about trying to be able to respond to the management, and to what we know about the fishery, and where we could implement meaningful measures, would be something that you would support us working on, with the idea that we would come back or this would be presented in the Draft Document in May.

I think the Board would have an opportunity to review what we've prepared, and decide at that time whether or not it is something with whether or not you would be comfortable sending out to the public for comment. I hope to be able to have that work done within our Agency, and with our stakeholders.

The idea would be to form a committee of recreational, commercial, charter, this that, you name them, they will be part of this group to help guide us and inform us as we work through this Addendum process. I am happy to answer

questions if anyone has any questions. Again, this is a concept. We haven't started the work, because I didn't want to get things started before the Board was comfortable with us taking this approach.

CHAIR WARE: I'm just going to ask some clarifying questions to help the conversation, if that's okay. I heard you talk about catch and release seasons, no targeting, harvest seasons. Are you focused on realigning all state seasons? Is that your focus, or are there measures?

MR. LUISI: It would be the seasons. I'll give you an example. I think an example would be helpful. We have a no targeting season closure in the spring. There are benefits to that, but that period of closure that we have in the spring is a six-week time period for when nobody can access striped bass, the resource is off limits.

We would like to be able to have the conversation with our stakeholders, and then have the ability to potentially readjust that season, and maybe let's just say we add more time in the summer to our closure period in the summer, when we know that the meaningful benefit of reduced dead discard during that time is going to be better for the stock than that closure in the spring.

We want to be able to have the ability to make those adjustments, and to kind of slide the pieces around to create a season that is equivalent to the conservation effort that we have now. But it is a readjustment of all of these pieces of the puzzle that have been lumped together for quite some time.

At the end of the day, if we cannot come to some agreement with our stakeholders, we will be the first to come back to this table and say, we were not able to reach something that everyone could live with, therefore we will stick with our status quo. We just want to have the ability to be able to work on something to present back to this Board, before it goes out to the public.

MS. FRANKE: Just a clarification from a staff perspective in terms of what this means for the Addendum. I think what I'm hearing you say is, you know currently Maryland has a season that is in place this year, a current recreational season. From a PDT perspective, you know for striped bass management documents we'll have the status quo option.

Usually, a striped bass management document would say, typically the past few documents have said, you know states maintain their recreational seasons from 2024. Of course, for this document we'll have options where states would have seasonal closures sort of on top of their current season. It sounds like what you're proposing is that regardless of whether or not the Board actually takes a reduction, you're saying for sort of the status quo.

Maryland would like to potentially modify their status quo season. You would modify your status quo season, and of course if there was a reduction you would take whatever the reduction is on top of that, that you're looking to modify your status quo baseline season, instead of having to keep your current season. Is that what I think?

MR. LUISI: That's correct.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you for that clarification. Let's have a Board discussion on this idea. Doug Grout.

MR. GROUT: Doesn't that sound like conservation equivalency under a new name? Really, you're just changing your seasons to make them equally conservative, but something that the public may or may not be more in favor of. If that is the case, isn't that really just putting a new name on something that isn't currently permitted? I like the idea, but I don't think it's permitted under the plan, at least the actual mechanics of it.

MS. FRANKE: Right, so currently conservation equivalency is not permitted, which would be, if

you have an Addendum that has a measure that's what has to be implemented. A state can't say, we're going to do something different than what the Addendum says. But the Board can choose to include whatever they would like in the Addendum, so if this were in the Addendum, you know that would be a measure that could be implemented.

CHAIR WARE: I've got quite a list here. Let's start with Dennis Abbott.

MR. ABBOTT: I just listened to Mike Luisi's proposal and it's probably a good proposal, but I don't think it should be part of what we're working on now on this Addendum. I don't know if it would put us in cross purposes. I don't know if it would delay anything in whatever we're doing.

I would suggest that Maryland go ahead in their own singular effort, and come up with whatever they want and present it to the Board at some point in time. But I just don't think it gets us to October as easily as it should. I'm not in favor of us waiting for a proposal from Maryland in May to have entered into this Addendum. I don't think it's a great idea. But it is a great idea to give it some thought.

MR. BORDEN: I agree with Dennis' point. You know I raised this whole issue of timing and the need to meet the October deadline. Throughout this discussion, every time somebody hangs another ornament on the tree, I think to myself, what types of delays are we going to get exposed to? If every state does this and then wants the Technical Committee to review it, we'll never meet our deadline.

I don't see how we can possibly do that. I'm opposed to including it in the Addendum. I have no objections if Mike wants to pursue it individually as a state agency, and then present those results, and maybe we can develop a model that we could add into a subsequent Addendum. But I am opposed to including it in this one.

CHAIR WARE: Marty Gary.

MR. GARY: Yes, I understand where Mike is coming from after spending 37 years down there and understanding the fisheries. Spatially/temporally I think in essence Mike is looking for some commonsense opportunity to shift and provide enhanced conservation where it is most needed, and maybe provide opportunities in other areas where it was.

These are, I think tools that all of us hope we can implement. The only question for my mind, so I understand where Mike is going, I'm supportive of that. The only concern I had was what Dennis and David said, how does it fit into our Addendum III process? Maybe, I guess where I land is in concurrence with Dennis and David. Let them go ahead and do that exploration with their stakeholders and bring it back to us, if that works.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so I guess to that timeline piece. If Maryland were to consider changing their baseline status quo season, obviously that might impact any new seasonal closures on top of that. I think in order to meet having a draft for May, DNR would have to provide that analysis to the PDT in a couple of weeks, like in the next few weeks, so that the PDT could include that in options. I think that would be if DNR could provide that analysis for inclusion in the options that is the only way we could meet the timeline.

CHAIR WARE: Pat Geer and then Nichola.

MR. PATRICK GEER: I've already talked to Mike's staff about some of these things and Dennis, I had the same concerns with that. What happens if all the states do this? I see where Mike is coming from on this. The question I have for Mike is, I'm assuming that you go through these measures and you would still meet the goals and reductions that we've done to date. That would be the ultimate goal. Your staff would be able to show that whatever

you do would still meet all the reductions we've done so far.

MR. LUISI: Yes.

CHAIR WARE: Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: I'm curious to see what Maryland might propose here, in terms of trying to put its no targeting closures in the place where release mortality is the worst. That makes a lot of sense. I'm interested to see what you can bring forward, provided it can be integrated without slowing down the rest of the Addendum. I think that's it.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to go to Emerson and then Mike, I'll come to you.

MR. EMERSON C. HASBROUCK: In theory I support what Maryland would like to do. I just don't know if this is the right time and place to do that. I'm thinking that of the eight regulatory measures that Mike mentioned and Maryland has had to implement since 2015. Those were all probably relative to reductions that were required during that time period.

Some of those measures, as I recall going back to 2015, included conservation equivalency to meet the required reduction. If Maryland then is going to kind of go back and reconfigure the actions that they put in place through conservation equivalency to meet reductions, then we're getting into conservation equivalency, which we're not supposed to do at this point in time. But then also, the Board has to approve any conservation equivalency. Each of those individual items as I see it has to come back to us for approval as conservation equivalency, but if we're not looking at conservation equivalency it's kind of a circular argument here. I applaud what Maryland wants to do, I just don't know if this is the right time.

CHAIR WARE: Mike and then Jay.

MR. LUISI: To a couple of the points. The first is, for anyone who is concerned that this proposal and the work that we would do would slow things down at all, that shouldn't be something you would be concerned about. We will pull the concept out of the Addendum before it starts to delay anything, if that is your major concern about this.

If we can't do the work on our end quickly enough, we'll stop, and we'll wait until another opportunity arises for this. The reason I'm bringing this up today is because this is the first time in a while where we have done an addendum with a little bit of time built in, so that we're not rapid fire reacting to some value or some catch estimate or something from an assessment, where we're trying to take action within a matter of weeks or months after that information is available.

This is an opportunity to rethink all of the actions that we've taken over the course of the last ten years. It will not slow things down. I don't see it as a conservation equivalency. The way I understand conservation equivalency is that the Board directs states to achieve a certain level of reduction and then we go home and craft something to bring back, in order to achieve that level of reduction.

We're not striving to achieve any level of reduction with this project. This would be to try to find something equivalent to what we have that we can reestablish at that baseline. My question to the Board is, for ten years we've been adding on and adding on and adding on to the rules that we have, which has created a very complicated array of what you can catch, when you can fish, when you can't fish, what type of bait you can use, what type of hooks you can have, how many trolling rods can you have on the boat at one time.

It's gotten a little out of control. My question to the Board is, if we can't do this now, now that we have a year ahead of us in order to get something done, when are we going to have the

ability to do it? We can't do conservation equivalency to make the adjustments. I've been asking for two years, I think, when the opportunity may arise.

I've been told by staff and by others that when there is an Addendum you can propose something in an Addendum, because it is not officially conservation equivalency, and so here I am today presenting this idea, planning to come back to you guys in May, or I guess as Emilie mentioned maybe this is work that, I had April 15th kind of in my mind, as when we would need to have information to staff.

If it's earlier than that, then we'll have to try to work under a more condensed timeline. But I just don't know where we go from here. If there is no ability to modify anything, given all the new information that we have about catch and release mortality. There are all these fish dying because of climate change and environmental conditions are driving mortality in certain places at certain times. If we can't make any changes then I don't know why we're here. This is why we're here, to have these discussions, and to try to be creative to build a fishery for my state.

I'm looking to build a fishery that meets all of the needed levels of conservation, but provides access so that the individuals most affected by the rules that we made can find some time to get on the water to make a few bucks, so that they can keep their business going over the course of the next few years, until we reach the benchmark, and then maybe we'll have to rethink all this all over again.

That is the last I'll say, I hope I cleared up questions that people had in their mind. I'm happy to answer any more questions. Sorry I don't have the details for you yet. But if the Board thinks we can still work on something like this and present it, we would be happy to do what the Board suggests.

CHAIR WARE: Mike, while you have the mic, I have two clarifying questions for you. Are you thinking of readjusting both Bay and Ocean seasons, and is it recreational and commercial or just recreational or just commercial?

MR. LUISI: We would be focused on the Bay, and we also have discussed with our commercial industry bringing them in as well, to think through what their seasons look like when fish are available for certain years, when it may not be a reasonable approach to continue fishing in the dead of the summer, when all other recreational fisheries are closed to striped bass fishing. We want to have those conversations with the commercial industry too. But the focus right now is Bay recreational, but the commercial, they will be part of that open discussion as well.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks for the clarification. I have Jay and then Dennis, and then we're going to assess where we're at and if we need a motion.

DR. McNAMEE: You know I find myself most aligned with what Nichola offered earlier. I am kind of curious about this, might just give us some confidence that he thinks with some criteria they can get this done and if not, they will kind of hold off, so that is good that answer, you know that concern that I had.

I was just thinking, you know there may be some benefit to the rest of us in the precedent. You know I think Maryland has probably the most intricate regulations, so this is most relevant for them. But you get stuck in this, you know when you are kind of boxed in like that you get stuck, and Mike, I can see that.

Having an opportunity to kind of like just get out of that pit that you're in, to kind of relook at things. Because when you get kind of trapped with this inertia of your regulations, the environment is changing, right, and so you just kind of keep propagating things that you've been doing, when the situation may have

changed out on the water. I like the idea of kind of pulling back, reanalyzing everything, getting at some of these other ideas that we've talked about like discard mortality concept and things like that. Maybe there is some way that they can look at it to reduce that, so I'm supportive of that. I might come back to this, I know you're trying to move off this, so I'm going to stop and then maybe raise my hand again in a little bit.

CHAIR WARE: Dennis and then we're going to assess where we're at.

MR. ABBOTT: I surely can't match Mike's eloquence in presenting points as he does. But again, I'm going to reiterate the fact that we're doing an Addendum, and I think inserting one state into providing input at this point in time does not get us to our Colberg. I would like to see Mike move ahead with what he's doing and bring that back, and maybe at some point in time we have to reanalyze how we're managing striped bass, because it sure has been taking us in different directions.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to assess where we're at here. I've heard lots of different opinions on this. At this point I'm taking it that we have a request from Maryland to add this topic to the Addendum. Is there anyone that is opposed to or cannot live with that addition? I would just be looking for a hand. I'm not asking for a vote; I'm trying to assess if we need a motion. If you are strongly opposed or cannot live with the Maryland proposal to add this, raise your hand. You have a question, David Borden.

MR. BORDEN: If we proceed down this road, when is this Board going to see a document from Mike? My assumption is the next follow up question is, you need a date, I think. Then the follow up question is, are we then going to task the same technical people that we're asking to do this other work with analyzing this, or are we just going to accept whatever they bring forward?

MS. FRANKE: I can maybe start to speak to that. I think if Maryland DNR can provide the PDT with their proposed new baseline season in the next few weeks, the PDT could potentially incorporate it into their calculation of options. If the Board is not comfortable with that, and would like the PDT to move ahead with the assumption that Maryland is not changing the status quo season. Sort of have this Maryland proposal separately come to the Board also in May, and then the PDT could potentially combine it with the other options after the May meeting.

That is an option as well. I think the Board could ask the TC to review the analysis if needed, but it is just sort of a matter of, is the Board comfortable with Maryland proposing an analysis in the next month and the PDT sort of rolling that analysis into their development of options for any additional reductions, or does the Board want to see the Maryland analysis separately in May, alongside an Addendum that just assumes Maryland season would be the same?

CHAIR WARE: Just to clarify, I'm not anticipating a Board meeting between now and May. You would not see that analysis or the TC review until May, which is fine if we're trying to wait until August to go out for public comment then. Just acknowledging some of the time constraints. Eric Reid.

MR. REID: I'm just trying to understand what exactly the product Maryland is going to produce for the Board. Is it going to be a baseline of measures that are by consent accepted by all the stakeholders, or is it going to be, we couldn't come to an agreement and we don't have anything for you, or is there going to be some other giant document in the middle of that? I'm not understanding what we should expect, other than those two things.

CHAIR WARE: Mike, do you want to answer that?

MR. LUISI: Well, it won't be a giant document, I'll tell you that. It will likely be, we haven't done the work yet, but it will likely be very simple, where there will be our current season structure, taking out the size limits and bag limits, just looking at the structure of the season and what's allowed. When you wake up on February 12, what can you do today? What are you allowed to do fishing wise?

Can you keep fish? Can you catch and release them only? What are those rules, what do they look like? We will take what we have and the tradeoff being, so let's say we reopen a portion of the winter fishery and we have closed winter/spring, but we accommodate that reopening of that fishery by closing an additional two or three weeks in the summer.

That's what we're talking about. It's pieces on the board, moving those pieces in a meaningful way to reshape the structure of the fishery. It will not be a complicated analysis, because the data within the waves of what is caught, what is released. All of those data exist. We're talking about kind of looking at this wave by wave, to see what we can accomplish in a restructuring of those rules.

Therefore, that would be produced and presented by the May meeting. Like I said before, if we cannot get, I don't want to sit down with our stakeholders and then have a similar discussion that we're having now with just new rules. I forget who said it earlier, when we were talking about lobster, it might have been Dan McKiernan who said, the balls in your court.

Tell us what you need to do for lobster, in order to achieve what we're striving for. That is my plan is to go back to our stakeholders and say, tell me what we can do to make a season for you that you can live with for the next few years. There is going to have to be tradeoffs, and people are going to have to compromise.

If they can't compromise, if they are unwilling to compromise, and everybody just digs in and sets up for battle, well then, the project is over. I'll be the first person to come back to say that that was a failed experiment, given the constraints of timing that we have, and maybe that will be something that we look at in the future, but not today. I hope that we'll find success in this, but that is all to be determined, I guess.

CHAIR WARE: We had a question from Cheri.

MS. CHERI PATTERSON: Mike, this is really intriguing. However, I have a question in regards to, we just got done with a conversation pertaining to achieving reductions from a regional perspective, and there seemed to be some push back on having it a single-state perspective. I see you headed in a single-state perspective, how is that going to roll into a regional perspective of achieving reductions?

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to have Emilie answer that.

MS. FRANKE: Thanks, Cheri, for bringing that up. I guess when we were talking about seasonal closures a little bit ago, I think we were sort of subconsciously maybe focused on the ocean. I did want to clarify that in the TC Report in December for the Chesapeake Bay, Chesapeake Bay options did include separate closures for Maryland and Virginia. If the Board is opposed to that you can definitely let me know.

But I think the PDT was planning to just start with what the TC Report had, which did allow Maryland and Virginia to have separate closures in the Bay, but you have regions in the ocean. If the Board is opposed to that let me know, but I apologize for not clarifying that earlier.

MS. PATTERSON: Thank you, I appreciate that.

CHAIR WARE: Doug, do you have a question?

MR. GROUT: It's not a question, it's just if this is something that is going to be moving forward, I would hope that when Maryland brings this to the PDT that they would run it by the Technical Committee, to make sure that their analysis that this is meeting our conservation goals is also something that they believe achieves it.

CHAIR WARE: We're just going to take a minute at the head of the table to chat, and we will be right back.

MS. FRANKE: Just from a staff timing perspective, we're just trying to think through. If Maryland presents an analysis with the modified baseline, and the Board wants that to go in front of the TC as well, it just becomes a question of does the PDT calculate the Chesapeake Bay closure options, assuming this new Maryland baseline, or assuming their current baseline season? I think that is the question we're just trying to grapple with as staff.

You know, assuming the TC, if the TC approves Maryland's analysis is reasonable, does the PDT calculate any new reduction seasonal closures based on this new Maryland season that the Board hasn't seen yet, or does the PDT first calculate the options based on the current Maryland season, and then we sort of see what happens with Maryland's proposal for an alternative season. That is what I'm grappling with, I guess if anyone has any thoughts of if Megan has any thoughts.

CHAIR WARE: I'm just thinking out loud. I think you might need both, because there will be an option in the Addendum, status quo for Maryland versus Option 2 is the new baseline. I don't think we would know as a Board which one we've selected until Final Action.

MS. FRANKE: What I can say is I think by May the PDT can calculate seasonal closure options for the Bay, including Maryland, based on their current season. I think based on what I've heard, there is some interest in Maryland

exploring their proposal of an alternative new status quo baseline that they can bring. Hopefully we can get it in front of the TC before the May Board meeting, and I'll talk to the PDT members to see if the Board decides at the May Board meeting that this new Maryland baseline is reasonable, how quickly we could sort of add a set of options with that new baseline. It's possible, depending on what we need to tweak in the spreadsheets. Maybe that's something we can do within a week or two of the May Board meeting and still be able to go out for public comment in late May.

If that makes sense just to reiterate, the PDT can calculate options right now using Maryland's current season. Maryland can also pursue potentially a new baseline. Then if the Board wants to move forward with this option for a new Maryland baseline, it's possible the PDT could work that into the document before it goes out for public comment, if that sounds reasonable to people.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, Matt and then we're going to assess where we're at.

MR. GATES: Thanks, Mike, for this discussion, I really appreciate that. I think maybe I would put the onus maybe on Maryland, if we're going to go forward with this, to at least coordinate with the TC and come up with, have them produce the options to put in the document that will meet the reduction required, an equivalent reduction required from their new, whatever they come up with as their new baseline.

CHAIR WARE: Ray and then we're really going to assess where we're at.

MR. RAYMOND W. KANE: I like your ideas, Mike, but I want time certain on this like we spoke earlier about the August meeting, or the annual meeting. I want time certain on this.

CHAIR WARE: I appreciate that, Ray. I don't know if that was a question to us or not, but

what I'll say is I think it is too early, for me at least, to have a vision of whether we would be ready in May or not, regardless of Maryland's proposal. Right, we have given the Plan Development Team a lot to work on.

I think they are going to try their best, and we'll see where we're at in May. Okay, so we are going to assess where we are at. At this point I'm taking that Maryland has put forward a proposal. Unless I hear someone say that they cannot live with that or are strongly opposed, we are going to assume that that is the process that we're going to move forward with. This is someone's opportunity to say that. Yes.

MR. DANIEL RYAN: I am strongly opposed to this, unless Maryland can guarantee that the six-week period from April 1 to May 15, where it states all areas are closed to striped bass fishing, if that time period remains as is, then I could support this. If this gives Maryland the flexibility to adjust that season, then I can't live with this.

CHAIR WARE: I appreciate that. I think those are some of the specifics, perhaps, that the Board would need to consider in May, so I don't have an answer for you on that now. I think it's a question of if folks need a motion on this. At this point I am not hearing that folks need a motion on this. Eric Reid.

MR. REID: I really applaud Maryland for doing this, but they can do it anytime they like. I hope you are wildly successful, because then all the rest of us are going to want to do it too. Good luck to you and Pandora and the box with that. I'm opposed to this. I think the timeline is too uncertain, the Addendum is too important, and I commend Maryland, they can do whatever they want. I would love to see the results of that. But I don't think it fits in here at all.

CHAIR WARE: To avoid a negative motion, Mike, I am going to have you make a motion to add this into the Addendum. You don't have to

make it. Someone should make a motion to add this into the Addendum, sorry, Mike.

MR. LUISI: I would be happy to make it, Megan. **I move to include the concepts of Maryland's baseline adjustment approach to Addendum III.**

CHAIR WARE: We're going to call them seasonal baseline, season closure baseline?

MR. LUISI: You call them anything you want, as long as it's not conservation equivalency.

CHAIR WARE: We'll let staff get that up on the screen, and then we'll see if there is a second. Okay, so we have a motion to include the process of the Maryland season closure baseline adjustment approach in Addendum III, is there a second to the motion? John Clark. We've had a lot of discussion on this. Has anyone not had an opportunity to speak on this? Okay, Adam, Joe, Doug, I'm going to cut you off, you've had some opportunity.

MR. GROUT: What I'm asking is, is this saying that yes, absolutely this was going to be in the Addendum without us seeing it, you know what comes out of it, or is this to consider in May that we will allow Maryland to include this new baseline? If it's saying we're giving approval to go into the Addendum right now, I'm opposed.

CHAIR WARE: I'll say what I'm thinking this motion says to me. I'm taking this motion to say, this is saying that Maryland should go and work with our constituents, and put forward a proposal that will come to the Board in May. I think it's likely that between now and May the TC would do some sort of review of that proposal.

The Plan Development Team may also work on seasonal closure options that are off of this proposal from Maryland. Certainly, the Board from my perspective, in May could always remove this from the document if you do not like what you see.

MR. LUISI: I will go as far as to say that if this doesn't end up where we need it to be by May, I will make the motion to remove it from the document, if it's not where it needs to be by the time we meet in May.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so I think it was Adam and Joe. I'm going to give you guys two comments here, and then we are going to caucus.

MR. NOWALSKY: I like how you just rephased this, Madam Chair, because we don't actually have a baseline adjustment approach that Maryland has developed yet to even thing about putting in here. As I view this, Maryland wants to go off and do some work. They are going to give that work to the TC and/or PDT to look at, at some point in time prior to May, assuming that they can get their constituents at home to agree to the work that they do. Maryland is going to do work. If their constituents agree to it, they would like the PDT and/or TC to take a look at it, and then if it passes muster, we would put this into the Addendum in May. That is what I'm really envisioning here. I really see the element of making the decision whether or not to include this now, as somewhat premature for us the Board.

I understand the situation however, that Maryland is in, is that they don't want to go off and do this work if there is no chance of this being included in the document anyway. There is a part of me that wants to make a motion right now to postpone this, let Maryland go off and do the work, if they so desire. They've heard the conversation around the table. They've heard the concerns that people have said. If they want to go off and do this work, okay.

At some point in time, all we would really need to do today is say, if Maryland does this work, we'll let the TC take a look at it at some point in time between now and May. That to me is really all we would sign off on here. I would make a motion we postpone this, we have the

conversation say, if Maryland develops this work they would show it to the TC.

The TC would bring it back to us in May, and then we would put this in the Addendum at that time. We sat down here, had other conversations about other addendums. We added an entire section to an Addendum today. We would be doing the same thing in this particular case. If you like that idea, I will make that motion. If that really isn't in the spirit of what we're trying to accomplish, then I'll just let you go forward with the vote.

CHAIR WARE: I think that might be a good approach, Adam, and I'll just say for the record this is saying, Maryland should go do your work. This is the Board acknowledging that the TC will review it and the Plan Development Team may start to work on it between now and May. If everyone is under that same understanding, then I will take your motion to postpone, Adam.

MR. NOWALSKY: I'm not seeing anyone telling me no, so **I would like to make the motion to postpone until the Spring Meeting.**

CHAIR WARE: You have a second by Eric Reid. We've moved to postpone the motion until the Spring Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board Meeting. Motion by Adam Nowalsky, second by Eric Reid. I feel like we've had a very robust discussion. Has anyone not had an opportunity to comment on this topic? Joe.

MR. CIMINO: I don't think this motion changes if there is a single state involved here. I very much appreciate what Maryland is trying to do, all the comments around the table. Eric said if this is successful a lot of states want to do it. Going back to Mike Luisi's comment, if not now, when? The idea that other states would review their baseline is then years out.

You know it is going to be very tough to go home and say, well, we don't have the time to do this. I do think there is an awkward timing issue. This reminds me of the bluefish sector

separation vote that we went back home and said, sorry, this was a surprise. The lesson there was like, don't ever do that again. This is like, well, we allowed one state to try something and yes, it would be great for us. It's a great notion. But sometime down the road the rest of us will get to try this too. I do not want to be opposed to this, because I believe in it as a great conservation measure. In a way, I'm sorry, Mike, but to me the timing is wrong. Adam's motion to postpone still only leaves this on the table for Maryland, as I understand it.

CHAIR WARE: That's correct this is only on the table, as I see it right now, for Maryland. I would say Joe, one option given the motion how they are currently drafted is, if someone is not in favor of the concept overall, I think your option is to vote no on both of these motions. Then I would take that to mean the Board is not interested in Maryland convening their group and coming forward with a proposal.

I'm sure we've thoroughly confused everyone at this point, so we're going to do a two-minute caucus, and we'll assess where we're at after two minutes. We are currently focused on the motion to postpone. If that motion to postpone passes, my understanding is that Maryland will work with their constituents. They will bring a proposal to the PDT and the TC, and then at the May Board meeting the Board can decide whether to add this to the Addendum or not. I think we're ready to vote, so **all those in favor of the motion to postpone, please raise your hand.**

**MS. FRANKE: In favor I have Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, PRFC, Maryland, Delaware, Maine and New Hampshire.**

**CHAIR WARE: Are there any votes in opposition?**

**MS. FRANKE: In opposition I have North Carolina, Virginia and D.C.**

**CHAIR WARE: Are there any abstentions?**

**MS. FRANKE: Abstentions, I have U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? The motion to postpone passes, 11 to 3 to 2.** The underlying motion will come back to the Board in May, and at that point we will have a better sense of Maryland's work with their constituents. Okay, are there any other topics for the Addendum that folks want to bring forward? John Clark.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair, and I have one that would be a commercial topic that I would like the PDT to look into. Hopefully it won't be as long as the last topic that came up. As we know, in the more than 10 years that we've been cutting back on the removals of striped bass, on the recreational side we've gone from directly quantifiable measures to much less and less quantifiable. But on the commercial side it's always been quota reduction, which is of course a very quantifiable measure.

I would like the PDT to take a look at a somewhat less quantifiable commercial measure, but one that I think will have an impact on reducing removals. That is to look at, currently we have point of sale requirement for tagging commercially caught striped bass. I would like the PDT to look at both Point of Harvest, which was recommended by the LEC before Addendum III to Amendment 6 was passed in 2012, and also Point of Landing, which full disclosure that is what Delaware has right now. As my fellow commissioner from Delaware pointed out that Point of Landing makes a safer opportunity to tag the fish, because it can be very difficult on rough days to tag the fish at sea, but it still, I think, provides more opportunity for Law Enforcement. My view of human nature, which seems to be confirmed all the time is that most people will follow the rules, but if you give people the opportunity to cheat, the bigger the

opportunity to cheat is then more cheating occurs.

I mean I think we've just seen a real-life example of this over the past few years, as many states have reduced penalties for shoplifting and enforcement of shoplifting. Now it seems like even in a place like Dover you've got half the toiletries are locked up in the store and you've got to get somebody to come open it up. Again, I'm not trying to impugn anybody here, but I'm just saying that I think that the more we can get a reduction in the number of commercial removals by looking at the timing of tagging the commercial catch.

The other benefit of this, I think, one of the things that comes up is we hear so many of the recreational anglers that are so opposed to the commercial fishery is they think that the quotas are always being exceeded, and we have better accountability of what is actually being removed by the commercial fishery, which I think would improve the confidence of recreational anglers, that the commercial fishery is indeed catching just its quota. I would like them to, as I said, take a look at those two options before this next Addendum.

CHAIR WARE: Given the time, I'll just ask, is there anyone that cannot live without or is strongly opposed to considering that in the Addendum? Okay, I think you're all set, John. Any other measures to consider in this Addendum? Jay.

DR. McNAMEE: It's not new, but revisiting. I'm sorry, something happened. This is a revisit. I was feeling guilty, you know we kept the mode separation stuff in there, like I was an opponent of them then gave you no guidance. I have been kind of struggling with that. The discussion with Maryland made me think, well, maybe there is actually some time here.

I guess what I'm suggesting is, I wonder if there is an opportunity to do some scoping with party and charter operators to get some feedback on

measures that are relevant and meaningful for them, to kind of constrain the universe a bit for you guys. If it's not possible, I understand, but given that last discussion I thought maybe it was in play.

CHAIR WARE: What I'm going to recommend is, I'm going to empower the states to do that. If states want to talk with their party/charter industries and come back to the May Board Meeting with information or provide that to the Plan Development Team through e-mail, that would be great. But I think that is the best way to handle that.

MS. FRANKE: From a staff perspective I would say, if you could bring that back to the PDT as soon as possible, I would think by early March would be, I know that is not a lot of time, but if you're looking for the PDT to develop options with that in mind, I think the PDT needs to start as soon as possible. Maybe I'll send a follow-up e-mail to think a little bit more about timing, but if you're hoping to scope then also have the PDT develop options for May, the PDT needs to know soon for how to structure the analysis.

CHAIR WARE: Nichola, I saw your hand for other measures.

MS. MESERVE: Yes, thank you. I just wanted to return to the topic of whether or not the PDT was going to be looking at possession limit changes. As the initiating motion stands, they are not included in there, so I would implore the Board Chair to require there be a motion to add possession limit considerations. There needs to be a motion to include them, otherwise the PDT will not be considering possession limit changes.

CHAIR WARE: I'm hearing no possession limit changes as a perspective on the Board member, is there anyone that cannot live with that or is strongly opposed? Adam Nowalsky, you are strongly opposed to Mike Luisi, so I would recommend you guys craft a motion to include that in the Addendum. Sorry, go ahead, Adam.

MR. NOWALSKY: **Move to include possession change options in the Addendum.**

CHAIR WARE: We will have staff craft something up and then we'll get a second. Okay, so we have a motion to include possession limit options in Draft Addendum III by Adam Nowalsky. Is there a second to that motion? Emerson Hasbrouck, thank you. Discussion on the motion. Excuse me, let me go to Adam first and then Emerson as the seconder.

MR. NOWALSKY: There is a handful of things that we've already discussed today, such as mode split, that are not explicit in that motion. When I go back to December and the Board motion that was passed had a couple of components of recreational measures changes, but not the possession element at the time, the discussion around the table was about, let's get something here down to guide what we're going to do, with the expectation that we would have this very meeting that we're having here today, to direct the PDT what to include.

We've now talked about adding some things, giving the PDT direction to analyze things today that were not explicit in that original motion. I would hope that possession limits, particularly in mode-split conversation that we've agreed to pass, we would not remove that simply because that language wasn't there. That is my reason for making this motion at this time.

CHAIR WARE: I'll go the seconder. Emerson, anything to add?

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, I don't have anything additional to add.

CHAIR WARE: All right, discussion by the Board. I think I saw Nichola and then Chris Batsavage.

MS. MESERVE: I think Adam may have addressed my question. I was wondering if his motion was specific to possession limit changes for the for-hire fleet in a mode-split option.

MR. NOWALSKY: I would advocate for giving the PDT options, so I'm somewhat hesitant to add that specific language to this. However, I would offer that as a starting point for the PDT, to look at mode-split with the for-hire, as a first place to use possession limits.

If there was something that they came across in doing their work, whereby they said oh, look, possession limits somewhere else would be a good option to give the Board. I wouldn't want to restrict them from having that flexibility now, but I would agree that the specific request would be to start with mode split at the for-hire as a place to utilize possession limits.

CHAIR WARE: Follow up, Nichola?

MS. MESERVE: Thank you for the clarification, Adam. I'm going to oppose the motion. I'm under the impression that we're looking at an Addendum to potentially restrict and reduce and conserve striped bass, not to liberalize possession limits right now. We're not going to half a fish, so this is looking at a two-fish limit or more.

I think we're either just, this is opening up Pandora's box, then the sea of options that the PDT might have to consider more so than anything else. I just think it is bad guidance to give the PDT right now, if we have any hope of getting something this year. I don't know how this fits in with what the goal of this Addendum is.

CHAIR WARE: Chris Batsavage.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Nichola basically said what I was going to say. We've really shifted toward balancing socioeconomic impacts, and pretty far away from striped bass stock rebuilding at this point of the Addendum. Oh yes, we're going to try to finish it all up by October at the latest. We're really setting ourselves up to fail.

CHAIR WARE: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: Just a clarification on what my intent in supporting this is about. Mode splits doesn't mean liberalizing to me, and I think the Board was really clear about mode splits not meaning liberalizing at the meeting we had a year ago, when we decided to remove mode splits from the discussion.

I made a motion at that meeting that was more conservative, the effort was more conservative than what the Addendum was suggesting we do, and it was opposed. The intent here, I would like to be able to see how much tradeoff there would be. Say you have a three-month harvest season. But the charter boats have two fish instead of one fish.

Well, maybe that season now isn't three months anymore, it's a month and a half, to account for the difference. In order to explore what that means to the people that we're managing these resources for, we need to understand what those tradeoffs look like. There is no intent in my mind that we would be looking to liberalize our efforts.

It's about finding some balance between what gets people fishing and what keep people at home watching TV, so that we can continue to rebuild the stock as we are dedicated to do, but provide some additional flexibility and opportunity throughout the seasons that we have in the near future.

CHAIR WARE: Steve Train, you have your hand up online.

MR. STEPHEN R. TRAIN: I have a question for Adam. Mike may have answered that if Adam feels the same way. I would like to support this, because I think it may get the boats off the water soon, and less fish thrown back will be a lower mortality. Adam, do you see that as the end results of this?

CHAIR WARE: Adam, if you would like to respond, you can.

MR. NOWALSKY: I can't say with any certainty that a change in possession limit is going to get people off the water any sooner or later, but I can say with 100 percent certainty that I agree with what Mike just said, that this motion was not intended for any sense of liberalization, it was intended that we're talking about developing options with seasonal closures, potentially no targeting as well. Those are tradeoffs, that is the conversation, and just leaving the box open for the PDT to develop options within that tradeoff paradigm for any reductions that are needed.

CHAIR WARE: I'm not seeing any other hands, so we're going to do a one-minute caucus, and then we'll vote. Okay, I think we are done caucusing, so we're going to call the question on whether to include possession limit options in Draft Addendum III. **All those in favor, please raise your hand.**

**MS. FRANKE: In favor I have Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, D.C. PRFC, Maryland and Delaware.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.**

**MS. FRANKE: Opposed I have Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Maine and New Hampshire.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?**

**MS. FRANKE: Abstentions, I have NOAA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? No null votes. The motion fails 7 to 7 with 2 abstentions.** Adam, do you have other measures to bring forward?

MR. NOWALSKY: If I understood the conversation and opposition, if you would allow it, Madam Chair, I would be inclined to make a **motion to include possession limit options for for-hire mode split options.**

CHAIR WARE: Okay. I am going to deem that to be significantly different or significantly enough different from the previous motion that we will have that motion up on the screen shortly. We have a second from Eric Reid. Adam, I will go to you for your rationale, then the seconder. We talked a lot about this, so if there are any critical comments, and then we're going to do a 30 second caucus. Then we will vote.

MR. NOWALSKY: All my previous comments still apply here. However, I would offer again that given the conversation, the concerns I heard about the previous motion, I understand from a conservation point we're not likely going back to two fish or three, or any more than that for the entirety of the recreational sector. But again, we're talking about tradeoffs within the for-hire sector, giving up seasons. This is a reasonable conversation to have, especially in light of the equity conversation we had earlier, what does equity really mean to different user groups?

CHAIR WARE: We have a motion to include possession limit options for for-hire mode split in Draft Addendum III. Anyone who has not had a chance to speak on this topic yet? Okay, we're going to do a 30 second caucus really quick. Okay, 30 seconds is up. We're going to call the question. **All those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand.**

**MS. FRANKE: In favor I have Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, D.C. PRFC, Maryland and Delaware.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.**

**MS. FRANKE: Opposed I have Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Maine and New Hampshire.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?**

**MS. FRANKE: Abstentions I have U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? No null votes, so I believe it's the same count, 7, 7, 2 abstentions, so the motion fails.** Okay, any other measures? John Clark, you have another measure?

MR. CLARK: Yes, I do, Madam Chair, it's another commercial measure. Hopefully the Board has been so softened up by now that it can go pretty quickly. I would just like the PDT to take a look at, well, this is going to be a big one here, quota reallocation of the commercial quota, but restricted to, right now we have 6 states that actually are harvesting striped bass commercially of the coastal quota.

I just want them to be considering, this would not be any increase, just if you take all the 2024 commercial quotas together it is about 1.75 million pounds. There would be no increase there. But once again, we're working on quotas that were set in the 1970s, back when I still had hair. A long, long time ago.

But I don't see there is really any possibility of us coming up with new methodology for estimating what would be a fair distribution of the commercial quota coastal quota any more, because I don't see it ever really opening up to the point where we have kind of the free for all we had back in the seventies, which is what this is based on.

I am not talking about anything radical right now. Maybe we could look at some options. For example, I see that out of the current quota 2024, two states have about over 70 percent of the quota, and some of the other states would like a little more. I think maybe we could look at something as simple as just putting a minimal percentage of the coastal quota for the states. I mean I know Craig could speak to this better than I could. But Delaware, all our fisheries are pretty small scale.

We still have watermen communities that, you know this has been going on for generations, right Craig, the gillnetting? You know we would

like to see that continue, and there has always been a market for it. The commercial fishermen in Delaware are supplying locally, as well as the region. We're getting to the point where it is diminishing returns.

Because every time we come back, and that is why I made the other suggestion for a commercial topic is just because no matter what we come up with for recreational it's always like, well, and then we'll just cut the commercial quota another 10 percent. You know we're getting to the point of no return for our commercial fisheries. Not seeing this increase anytime soon, I just think it's time we could look at some commonsense ways to reallocate.

CHAIR WARE: I'll just say as Chair; I have some concerns about adding commercial reallocation to an Addendum where we have a motion that says we are taking final action by the October meeting. That is my personal opinion. But I would just speak that for the Board for your consideration. We have an idea to add commercial reallocation to the Addendum. Is there anyone that is strongly opposed or in opposition? Nichola, okay, so we will need a motion, John, to add commercial reallocation to the Amendment.

MR. CLARK: Okay, I can make it very simple. Are we ready? I just say, **move to ask the PDT to investigate reallocation of the commercial quota between the 6 states that are harvesting the coastal stock commercially.** It would be no increase in the amount harvested, just reallocate what has actually been allocated through the 2024 quotas.

CHAIR WARE: Is there a second to that motion? Not seeing a hand, but I'm just going to have staff check the webinar. Eric Reid is going to second that motion. I'm going to go, John, do you have any additional rationale to provide for this motion? I'm going to go to the seconder first, then I'll come back to Craig, if that is okay. I'm going to pause, actually, just to get the

motion on the board really quick. John, can I have you read that motion? Read it into the record, and make sure it matches what you're looking for.

MR. CLARK: Certainly. Move to ask the Plan Development Team to investigate reallocation of the commercial quota among the 6 states that currently harvest striped bass from the coastal stock. There would be no increase from the total 2024 quota of those 6 states combined.

CHAIR WARE: I'll go to the seconder, Eric Reid for a rationale.

MR. REID: We've been having this discussion for a very long time, and I've supported it every opportunity, and I'm not going to fail that today. But I can't even imagine this will pass in any way, shape or form, to be perfectly honest with you.

CHAIR WARE: Craig, I will now go to you, thanks for your patience.

MR. CRAIG D. PUGH: As the request was for improvement or socioeconomic status, we can find results where this adds up to an 80 percent disparity on some levels. We do not see much equity balance; it's more I eventually see just unfair treatment over a long period of time. It's now entered into two generations of this disparity, which we know we can catch the fish.

We would like to have the opportunity to do so before that escapes us. I don't quite understand why this disparity seems to be so long lasting, other than I understand states not wanting to give up their quota. But I hear all of this talk today about equity and balance and socioeconomics. I've lived that within this disparity.

It's embarrassing to know that we do have such a small allocation in our state, when we have these discussions through other states, as we market our fish. Now if I ask these questions

about that, of course that comes back to the Commission. What the Commission is willing to provide and what the Commission is willing to do to help those people in those desperate positions.

We do feel we're in a desperate position. We've extended several cuts over the years at multiple times. That is because our quota is so small that impacts us greatly. We're now down to about 1100 pounds annually per fisherman in the state. It takes ordinarily two, three days to catch that. That is not really an income, that is not really a job, that is a hobby. It's a shame. Some practical talk here about this, to level off this playing field, would be appreciated. If you all would consider and extend that to us, we would appreciate it, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Craig. I have Ray and then Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. KANE: Yes, I have a question about the motion. It refers to only coastal stock. Isn't there a commercial fishery in Chesapeake Bay?

CHAIR WARE: Yes, I'll let John clarify here.

MR. CLARK: Yes, there is, Ray, but these are the states that all their quota is coming out of the coastal stock. I mean two of the states have both, but this only refers to, like for Maryland and Virginia, they both have small coastal quotas also. This is just for the coastal quota, not the Chesapeake.

MS. FRANKE: Just one more clarification. This is only referring to ocean quota, and the 6 states are referring to who currently harvest striped bass commercially in the ocean that is Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, correct? You're not including North Carolina.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. HASBROUCK: I had my hand up because I was prepared to amend this motion, but I've

reconsidered that, so I'll pass for the moment. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: John, just to clarify. Can I ask what your vision is for New Jersey? I understand they don't have a commercial fishery but they do use that quota.

MR. CLARK: Well, I wanted to leave Connecticut and New Jersey, who both turned their commercial quota into bonus fish recreationally. This is not affecting the total amount of quota out there, I wanted to leave New Jersey and Connecticut alone, they just keep what they've got for their bonus program. This is only for the states that are commercially harvesting. You take the total amount that they are harvesting, and we just reallocate it a bit among the states that are in that category.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, anyone who is burning to comment on this? Yes, Roy Miller. Then I don't see any other hands, and Pat Geer and then we will caucus.

MR. MILLER: A quick clarification, Madam Chair. Does this include North Carolina's commercial quota or not?

MR. CLARK: No.

MR. MILLER: That quota wouldn't be available for reallocation, am I correct?

CHAIR WARE: That is my understanding of the motion.

MR. CLARK: Just a little further explanation. I knew that was a very sensitive issue, I didn't want to bring that up. I mean North Carolina is that big chunk of quota that is not being used. We talked about that with the previous Addendum here, where there was a possibility of transferring that, but that is something that won't happen anytime in the near future. This is just dealing with what we're actually harvesting commercially now, and so there wouldn't be any of those other issues involved.

CHAIR WARE: Pat Geer.

MR. GEER: John, I know we talked about this before. How many pounds would you need to be whole?

MR. CLARK: Oh, a million, two million. No, one of the things I thought about here was like I said, just a minimum level, Pat, which would if for example you divided it up with a minimum amount a state could get, would be 10 percent of that entire amount. That would bring us back somewhat closer to where we were under Amendment 6, where we were at 193,000 pounds there. If 10 percent was the minimum, we would be at about 175,000 pounds. It's not a lot more but it would help.

CHAIR WARE: Seeing no other hands we're going to caucus for 30 seconds. That was 30 seconds, so I'm not seeing anyone waving their hand that they need more time, so we are going to call the question. This is asking if we should add commercial quota reallocation to this Addendum. **All those in favor, please raise your hand.**

**MS. FRANKE: In favor I have Rhode Island and Delaware.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.**

**MS. FRANKE: Opposed I have Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, D.C., PRFC, Maryland, Maine and New Hampshire.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?**

**MS. FRANKE: Abstentions I have NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? Not seeing any null votes. The motion fails 2 to 12 with 2 abstentions.** At this point I'm not even going to ask if there are other measures. I think that we have thoroughly discussed this, and we're going

to move on. The Plan Development Team has a lot of work ahead of them.

I'm going to thank them ahead of time for all of their efforts between now and May, and we will come back to this at the May Board Meeting. We're going to move on to our next agenda item, which is Review and Populate the Advisory Panel. Emilie is going to do that.

#### **REVIEW AND POPULATE THE ADVISORY PANEL**

MS. FRANKE: For your consideration in supplemental materials was a nomination from Maine for Captain Peter Fallon to joint the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel.

CHAIR WARE: We're looking for a motion. Representative Hepler.

REPRESENTATIVE ALLISON HEPLER: That's my queue. I would like to nominate Captain Peter Fallon to the Advisory Panel.

CHAIR WARE: Could I ask you to read the motion into the record?

REPRESENTATIVE HEPLER: Oh, yes, **move to approve Peter Fallon of Maine to the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel.**

CHAIR WARE: We got a **second from Eric Reid.** I just wanted to take a moment. Peter Fallon is replacing Dave Pecci, who is retiring. I went back and looked. Dave joined the AP in 2002, he has been on this AP for 22 years. I really want to thank Dave on behalf of Maine for his over two decades of service on this Advisory Panel, that is very commendable.

We wish you the best in retirement, Dave. Is there any discussion on this motion? **Any opposition to the motion? Okay, the motion is approved by unanimous consent,** thank you. We are now on to Other Business. Is there any Other Business before the Board? Dennis Abbott.

MR. ABBOTT: Reminding me, after you congratulated the leaving member. In the last month or so, I think it was in December that a longtime Maine fisherman and member of the Maine Advisory Committee on Shrimp, a gentleman named Marshall Alexander passed away after three years with dementia and a few other things. He was a wonderful man; he was a pleasure to deal with. He had a few little sayings, like every time you asked him something he would say, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, and whatever. But I will miss Marshall Alexander and I just wanted to make that mention.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

CHAIR WARE: Thank you, Dennis for that remembrance. Any other, Other Business? Okay, we are adjourned, thank you everyone for your patience.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2025)